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Between 'Reality' and Representation: Photographic Ambiguities of Place and Identity in Japan's Postwar Modernity

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Altered versions of chapters four and five of this thesis have previously been published elsewhere as separate journal articles.

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INTRODUCTION

Photographs are slippery documents. While they carry the promise of a pure truth, the nature of this truth is elusive. Any potential veracity that might be inherent in the photograph can perhaps be attributed to the very materiality of the medium itself. The photograph is quite literally a physical image formed when rays of light reflect and bounce back from whatever the camera is pointed towards. These light rays then travel through the camera lens to make contact with the film or digital sensor, which fixes them in place. In the capturing of a photographic image, therefore, light, an element of nature, combines with technology. This meeting of technology and nature can explain why photographs are so persuasive. The combination of the visceral immediacy of the material world with the abstract knowledge of scientific rationality is a potent combination that encourages us to suspend our critical faculties. When we look at a photograph, for a moment at least, we see – or believe that we see – not a representation but the thing or scene that was photographed itself. As a consequence, the medium of photography appears to carry a sense of moral weight. There is a certain trust placed in the photograph that lulls the viewer into thinking that what she or he sees is exactly what happened, or that the people and objects captured are exactly as they were. Particularly in the field of documentary photography, the mode of photography examined in this thesis, the photographer must not be seen to betray this trust. More than any other, the documentary genre is charged with the task of providing an unmediated account of social reality. This persistent expectation of facticity in the photographic image explains, at least in part, the heated recriminations that can occur upon the discovery of photographic manipulation. What these discoveries point us towards, moreover, is the extent to which the production of photographs is mediated by social institutions and their prevailing discourses, and also by the authorial intentions of the photographer. Such discoveries further emphasise the ambiguity generated by the tensions between these elements. The discussion that follows will investigate this ambiguity, and how such ambiguity relates to notions of place, in the work of seven photographers working largely in the postwar era in Japan. These photographers are: Hayashi Tadahiko (1918-1990),

Takanashi Yutaka (b.1935), Naitō Masatoshi (b.1938), Hamaya Hiroshi (1915-1999), Suda Issei (b.1940), Tōmatsu Shōmei (1930-2012), and Ishikawa Mao (b.1953).

Before providing information about the photographers and their work, it is important to clarify here the specifics of authorial intention in the context of photographic representation. It might be argued that it is impossible to ever fully know photographer intent. Even in the documentary genre, and even when the photographer makes a specific statement regarding her or his intent in creating an image, other factors come into play. The conscious objectives that shape the photographic project are in turn shaped themselves by prevailing discourses. In analysis of this kind we must therefore move beyond any approach that is overly dependent upon simplistic notions of the 'genius' auteur to always acknowledge the ambiguities of context.

Photographer intent, however, cannot be overlooked. While this intent operates first and foremost in relation to subject choice, it is also evident in terms of decisions made regarding technical matters such as camera use, film selection, and processing technique. In the discussion that follows, attention will therefore be paid to how aspects of image construction such as lighting, camera angle and colour do indeed provide insights into photographer intent. These technical devices, often immediately visible in the photographic image in a way that does not apply to the written text, are important clues as to the particular effect that the photographer was trying to achieve and more general aspects of the purpose of the image.

This thesis analyses representations of Japanese society produced, as noted above, by seven Japanese photographers. Each chapter focuses on a series of analogue images that were compiled for publication as a monograph. By considering the images in terms of their historical, discursive, and authorial context, the analysis will examine the ways in which these representations reveal the ambiguous nature of Japanese identity in the postwar era and how this identity relates to place.

The thesis will illustrate that, just as the meanings of photographs evade fixity, so too are notions of identity fraught with a fluidity that resists pinning down. This was particularly the case in the postwar era that saw rapid economic development and the monumental social changes that accompany such development. It was thus a time during which collective Japanese identity experienced a crisis, with individuals turning to past traditions as a means of critiquing capitalist modernity. Given the contingencies of war, such critiques by necessity implicated the United States. It is paradoxical that those who mounted these critiques were often themselves deeply entrenched within the structures of capitalist modernity in a way that saw them embrace aspects of the American way of life that they claimed to reject. Each of the seven photographers featured in his or her own way expresses the complexities of this debate.

The photographic monographs selected for discussion provide a range of representations of place in Japan. While monographs by Hayashi, Takanashi, and Naitō offer unique perspectives on urban spaces, those by Hamaya, Suda, and Tōmatsu respond to Japan's putatively traditional landscapes and the people who live in those sites. It will become clear that tradition, while often found in a rural setting, can also reside in the city. The final monographs considered, by Tōmatsu and Ishikawa, provide two quite different responses to US military base town in Japan, with particular focus on the American presence in Okinawa.

While each photographer presents a range of images of a specific aspect of postwar Japan, their work is linked by the way in which each speaks to the ambiguous nature of identity in Japan at that time. This ambiguity is particularly expressed through the endeavour of the photographer to represent a certain interpretation of place, a concept closely tied to a sense of identity and which can be both grounding and disorienting. In regards to notions of place, the types of identity to which I refer are twofold: cultural/national identity and individual – subjective – identity. Both aspects are prominent in the discussion that follows, with acknowledgement also given to more specific notions such as gender and race.

To foreground these later discussions, this introductory thesis chapter will first explore the relation between photography, identity and place. While the analysis chapters of the thesis will give greater overt emphasis to place and location – whether urban centre, rural periphery, or outlier island chain – the notions of identity discussed in this introduction is understood as embedded in later discussions of place. Specifically, in the photographs produced by Hayashi, Takanashi, and Naitō, the urban landscape is a place that seemingly offers individual freedom from traditional structures and the excesses of wartime propaganda. Yet in the urban images of each photographer, echoes of war and the rationalising forces of Japan's postwar modernity threaten individual identity. The rural spaces depicted by Hamaya, Suda, and Tōmatsu, appear to offer the opportunity to rehabilitate a lost sense of cultural identity that is the obverse of modern existence, yet the images reveal this sense of identity to be ultimately elusive. In Tōmatsu and Ishikawa's images of the US military base towns in Japan, fixed notions of cultural identity in particular prove elusive given the hybrid nature of these spaces.

The chapter begins, however, by considering the implications of debates around photographic manipulation. These debates, it will be argued, highlight both our faith in the photographic image and the mediated nature of those images. Consideration will also be given in this chapter to theoretical discourses around photographic meaning, with particular attention to the significance that the photograph's connection to material and historical reality holds for viewer interpretation. A further element to be considered is the manner in which the instability of photographic representation converges with ideas of place and identity. Examining notions of postwar Japanese identity will help us understand how this concept was subject to conflicting discourses that sought on the one hand to tie the people of Japan to a fixed and privileged point often located in past time and space, and which were on the other hand fluid and elusive. The chapter concludes with an explanation of the thesis structure.

The Perceived Veracity of Photographic Representation

In an era of digital manipulation, at which time the veracity of photographic representation has never been more questionable, the medium of photography is nonetheless still considered an especially objective mode of representation. This is particularly true of the documentary photograph, in which the viewer places an exceptional level of trust. An example of this trust is the outraged response that inevitably arises in the many cases of photographic manipulation that have occurred throughout photography's lifespan. As a recent example, scandal arose in photography circles when Italian photographer, Paolo Viglione, discovered digital alterations in an image included in a 2016 exhibition by former war photojournalist and highly popular producer of images depicting the non-West, Steve McCurry. Viglione pointed out that a background sign in a Cuban street scene had been clumsily moved in a way that made digital tampering clearly apparent.[1] Figure 1 below is a close up of this alteration, which reveals part of the sign protruding from the man's foot. Figure 2 indicates the position of the digital manipulation in the larger image.

[1] DL Cade, "Botched McCurry Print Leads to Photoshop Scandal," PetaPixel.com.

Figure 1: Detail from “Havana, Cuba, 2014” by Steve McCurry. Accessed September 12, 2016, URL: www.paoloviglione.it/quando-steve-mccurry-etc-etc

Figure 2: “Havana, Cuba, 2014” by Steve McCurry (red indicator added by Viglione). Accessed September 12, 2016, URL: www.paoloviglione.it/quando-steve-mccurry-etc-etc

McCurry's response to this discovery – and to revelations of other instances of manipulation in his work – was to say that he now considers himself a 'visual storyteller rather than a photojournalist.'[2] In this statement McCurry tries to neatly draw a line between the photographer as documenter and as auteur, seeking absolution by placing himself in the latter camp. He later, however, vowed only to use digital enhancing software on his images in a 'minimal way,'[3] a concession that seems to indicate that, in retrospect, he saw the difficulties in making such a clear separation between documentation and interpretation. McCurry's transgression in this image is relatively minor in the broader scheme of photographic tampering – the change appears to have been made for aesthetic reasons (that is, to prevent a street sign from protruding from a person's head) that do not noticeably alter the impression on the viewer. The same cannot be said of other instances of image enhancement in his work. For instance, accusations emerged from former local assistants that McCurry had staged images taken in the past in India (and later published in *National Geographic*) or else altered elements of the scenery.[4] The photographer's connection to *National Geographic*, a magazine regarded in some quarters as providing an aura of photographic 'authenticity,' was a key basis for the widespread criticism that the discovery engendered. Being featured in this magazine created an impression of McCurry as a photojournalist who, by definition of that role, was committed to unmediated representation. Viewers were, justly or otherwise, incensed when this proved not to be the case.

There have been similar comparable scandals in photojournalism's upper echelons. In 2013 the winning image (figure 3, featured below) in the prestigious World Press Photo Contest (run by the World Press Photo Foundation, which lists 'accuracy' and 'impartiality' as two of its core values[5]) attracted heavy

[2] McCurry, cited in Olivier Laurent, "Steve McCurry: I'm a Visual Storyteller Not a Photojournalist," Time.
[3] McCurry, cited in ibid.
[4] Kshitij Nagar, "Editorial: The Eyes of the Afghan Girl: A Critical Take on the "Steve McCurry Scandal"," www.writingthroughlight.com, http://www.writingthroughlight.com/news/editorial-afghan-girl-steve-mccurry/.
[5] World Press Photo Foundation, "About," http://www.worldpressphoto.org/about.

criticism from other photographers and journalists for the extent to which the photograph had been digitally enhanced.[6]

Figure 3: "Gaza Burial" by Paul Hansen. Winner of the 2013 World Press Photo Contest. Accessed 16 September 2017 at http://www.worldpressphoto.org/collection/photo/2013/spot-news/paul-hansen

This harrowing image depicts the corpses of two children, their faces clearly visible, who were killed in an Israeli airstrike, being carried by their uncles to a nearby mosque for burial. At issue was what was deemed as the abnormal lighting of the image, an effect that the photographer attributed to the natural conditions of that time and place.[7] It was also, however, the product of intensive post processing that exaggerated the features of the men by lightening these parts of the image while darkening other areas such as the bottom left hand corner. Roger Tooth, a technology journalist, reported that the photographer created three duplicates of the original digital file, adjusting each to different

[6] Olivier Laurent, "World Press Photo Controversy: Objectivity, Manipulation and the Search for Truth," *British Journal of Photography* (2013), http://www.bjp-online.com/2013/05/world-press-photo-controversy-objectivity-manipulation-and-the-search-for-truth/.

[7] Matthias Krug and Stefan Niggemeier, "Enhanced Reality: Exploring the Boundaries of Photo Editing," (2013), http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/growing-concern-that-news-photos-are-being-excessively-manipulated-a-898509.html.

tonalities, and then compositing the duplicates together in the final image, a process that almost certainly impacted the impression made by the image.[8] After expert analysis of the digital file, the World Press Photo Contest organisers ruled the level of manipulation to be acceptable.[9] This raised the ire of other news industry professionals including seasoned journalist, Karen Dybis, who declared that 'a photo cannot be changed digitally in any way other than cropping it for size for it to be considered true, accurate and fair to the viewer. Period.'[10] This view is shared by photojournalist Michael Kamber, organiser of the 2015 exhibition, *Altered Images: 150 Years of Posed and Manipulated Documentary Photography*.[11] This exhibition was designed as 'an indictment of some modern practices, and practitioners, of photojournalism.'[12] *Altered Images* was held in the same year that a World Press Photo Contest winner was disqualified because the photographs involved were found to have been both staged and incorrectly captioned. 2015 was also the year in which twenty per cent of contest entries were judged ineligible due to excessive image manipulation.[13]

Kamber's exhibition featured material from earlier periods of photography, making it clear that image manipulation in documentary photography far predates the digital age. For instance, many images attributed to Matthew Brady, the foremost photographic documenter of the American Civil War, were staged or captioned misleadingly.[14] In the twentieth century, accusations of staging were made against the photo by esteemed photojournalist, Robert Capa, of a 'loyal militiaman' being shot during the Spanish Civil War (figure 4). The most

[8] Roger Tooth, "Super-Reality of Gaza Funral Photo Due to Toning Technique Says Contest Winner," *The Guardian* (2013), https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2013/may/14/gaza-funeral-photograph-world-press.
[9] "World Press Photo Verifies Paul Hansen's Winning Picture," (2013), https://nppa.org/news/world-press-photo-verifies-paul-hansens-winning-picture.
[10] Karen Dybis, "Altered Image, Vanished Trust: Photojournalism in the Age of Digital Manipulation," Center for Digital Ethics & Policy, Loyola University, http://digitalethics.org/essays/photojournalism-in-the-age-of-digital-manipulation/.
[11] http://www.alteredimagesbdc.org/
[12] James Estrin, "Posing Questions of Photographic Ethics," *New York Times* (2015), http://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/06/16/posing-questions-of-photographic-ethics/.
[13] Rachel Donadio, "World Press Photo Revokes Prize ", ibid., http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/05/arts/design/world-press-photo-revokes-prize.html?_r=2.
[14] Paul Martin Lester, *Photojournalism: An Ethical Approach*, Routledge Library Editions: Journalism (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2016), 94-8.

recent of these accusations occurred as late as 2009, when a Spanish academic argued that the photograph could not have been taken at the field of battle given in the caption.[15]

Figure 4: "SPAIN. Córdoba front. Early September, 1936. Death of a loyalist militiaman" by Robert Capa. © International Center of Photography/Magnum Photos

Similarly, Eugene Smith, a celebrated American photojournalist who documented, among other well known projects, the effects of environmental mercury poisoning in Minamata, Japan, and whose photographic essays regularly featured in *Life* magazine, was known to heavily manipulate the intensity and graduations of black and white tones in his work.[16]

The following image (figure 5), taken during Japan's 1937 invasion of China, had serious political implications for Japan.

[15] Larry Rohter, "New Doubts Raised over Famous War Photo," *New York Times* (2009), http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/18/arts/design/18capa.html.
[16] Lester, *Photojournalism: An Ethical Approach*, 123.

Figure 5: "Terrified baby on Shanghai Station, 1937" by H.S. Wong. *Life*, October 4, 1937; p. 102.

This image, featured in *Life* magazine, was taken by Chinese photographer, H.S. Wong, and estimated by the publishers to have had a 'potential audience' of '136,000,000.' *Life* was later to somewhat hyperbolically claim that 'no picture ever aroused more worldwide sympathy for the victims of aggression than did Wong's.'[17] Discussing the important influence that the image had on American perceptions of Japanese aggression in China, Tessa Morris-Suzuki also notes that, at the time, the photographer was accused of staging the image. In particular, Wong was said to have purposefully excluded from the frame the adults who were accompanying the child. A less substantiated – but potentially more damning – accusation was that the child had been 'borrowed' from people

[17] "Some Mementos from Malaya," *Life*, March 23 1942, 34.

nearby and then posed for the photograph.[18] Japan's 'propaganda experts' exploited the doubts surrounding the image not only to discredit the veracity of the photograph, but also to undermine 'US and Chinese accounts of the bombing as a whole.'[19] In recent times, these accusations of manipulation have been taken up by Japanese nationalist historian, Fujioka Nobukatsu (b. 1943). Fujioka drew on this example to discredit photographic representations of Japanese war atrocities in the Chinese mainland generally, and thus 'imply doubt about the wider surrounding historical event.'[20]

The recent controversies around digital manipulation, then, can be considered a new iteration of debates which highlight the tension between the role of the photographer and notions of photographic truth. The examples above have been deliberately chosen from the field of documentary photography, as, more than any other, this genre carries with it the expectation of literal record. When looking at photographs that document aspects of human society, there is a strong tendency for the viewer to take the image at face value, to accept its prima facie meaning. This is despite the long history of debates around photographic deceptions. This continued tendency not only not to question, but to not want to question, the truth of photographs in spite of knowing the potential for manipulation does not necessarily indicate naivety. Instead, it speaks to the uniquely persuasive power of the photograph.

To focus purely on the issue of post-capture manipulation or obvious examples of staging is to forget the other less obvious ways that the photographer influences the final image. As photographer Ashley Gilbertson noted in regard to recent manipulation debates, before the advent of digital cameras even those photographers who did their utmost to deliver 'straight' photographs still made aesthetic choices regarding the look of the final image. Photographers did this, however, through decisions relating to elements such as the type of film chosen

[18] Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *The Past within Us: Media, Memory, History* (London: Verso, 2005), 73-4.
[19] Ibid., 74.
[20] "The Nature of Empire: Forest Ecology, Colonialism and Survival Politics in Japan's Imperial Order," *Japanese Studies* 33, no. 3 (2013): 75.

and the kind of filter placed over the lens. Gilbertson recounts how, while covering the conflict in Bosnia during the early 1990s 'we had four different photographers shooting the same thing on a street corner, where one guy was shooting with a tungsten filter, one guy was shooting with Kodachrome and a warm filter, another guy was shooting on black-and-white film, and another was shooting on colour negative [and as a result] you had four completely different images, four different perceptions of reality, four very different looks, but all very relevant.'[21]

The aesthetic variations resulting from the film and lens filter choices that are outlined by Gilbertson suggest only two of the many technical interventions that the photographer can make upon an image. Other examples include the use of selective focus (controlled by adjusting the 'aperture' setting on the lens), varying tonal contrast (controlled through camera settings at the time of capture or in the digital or analogue processing of the photograph), and the amount of time during which an image is exposed, a decision that affects the extent to which moving objects are either frozen in place or blurred. A particularly significant way in which the photographer influences the final image is through the use of light. Although technical decisions made in this regard are often influenced by the natural conditions that prevail at the time, there are nonetheless several intervention options available. For example, in the case of the analogue photography discussed in this thesis, at times of low lighting photographers can use a film coated with particularly large light-sensitive silver particles. This type of film bestows a rough, grainy texture to the image. Alternatively a camera flash might be used, introducing an artificial light that can, depending upon how it is deployed, flatten the three dimensional appearance of a scene, isolate subjects from a dark background, and/or increase the perceived clarity of the image. This latter effect allows the viewer to pick up small textural details. In addition to artificial enhancement, choices regarding natural lighting also strongly affect the 'look' of an image. For example, early morning or late afternoon sunlight tends to be warmer, adding a yellow tint that makes colour

[21] Laurent, "World Press Photo Controversy: Objectivity, Manipulation and the Search for Truth".

images appear richer and more vibrant. This morning or afternoon light is also characterised by strong shadows that result from the low angle of the sun. Thus, photographs taken at these times of day can exhibit dramatic regions of dark and light as well as exaggerating the seeming roughness of textures. The overhead light of the midday sun, on the other hand, tends to produce colours and tones that are relatively flat. Furthermore, midday light has a bluish tint that makes colours appear cooler or less warm, an effect that at times can produce a less dramatic aesthetic than that which might be seen in photographs taken at either end of the day.

Perhaps even more important than these technical interventions in the process of image construction, however, is the photographer's choice of subject, including related issues such as framing and composition. Although in the field of photojournalism, discussed above, the choice of subject matter can be predetermined by what the mainstream press and the public deem newsworthy, this is less true of the social documentary style of photography discussed in this thesis. In that genre, subject matter is often more a function of the concerns and interests of the photographer. In addition to the subject matter, framing and composition most obviously demonstrate the power exercised upon the image by the photographer in terms of decisions made about what is included in the frame and, more crucially, what is left out. This latter choice has the potential to affect deeply the viewer's sense of context. Similarly, the positioning of subjects in relation to each other and to the surrounding environment can significantly alter the emphasis of an image, as does the positioning of the camera near or far, above or below the subject.

Yet, beyond the ethical concerns invoked, the extent to which image manipulation continues to provoke outrage reflects our persistent trust in photographic veracity. There is something inherent in the photograph that pushes us to forget, at least for an instant, that these representations are highly volatile, constructed depictions and not simply 'objective' documents. The photograph initially presents as self-contained, its veracity unsullied by external influence. This impression, however, is often fleeting, so that unwavering trust

gives way to contemplation of what lies beyond the four borders of the image itself. These moments give photography its particularly unique power, and are central to the analysis provided in the chapters that follow. While the nature of this power will be fleshed out at a further point in this chapter, for the moment it will be useful to compare modern and postmodern ideas of photographic meaning in order to further explore the persistent idea of the photograph's imminent truth.

Between Reality and Representation: Discourses of Photographic Meaning

Modern industrialised societies have nurtured two main strands of photographic discourses, discourses that are linked to wider aesthetic debates. These are the high art modernist theory of aesthetics, and the postmodern theory of relational meaning. The modernist view has overly emphasised the formal qualities imbued by the photographer upon the image as the locus of its meaning, thus insufficiently acknowledging the contingent factors that influenced its creation. Postmodernists, on the other hand, downplay the influence of the photographer upon the photograph, focusing instead on the institutional and discursive factors that informed its construction. In both instances an important aspect of the photograph is neglected. In reality, to access the rich meanings that photographs possess, it is important to pay attention to authorial intention, how the image has been constructed, and the broader discursive and other contingent factors that give it meaning.

The modernist approach attributes the meaning of a given photograph to its formal qualities. A key proponent of this perspective was seminal early twentieth century American photographer Alfred Stieglitz, who arrived on the scene at the height of the influence of the photographic Pictorialists, a group that sought to align themselves with the fine art status of painting by mimicking its aesthetic qualities. Stieglitz was highly critical of this approach and set out, instead, to establish the high art photograph as a unique form of expression separate from

traditional arts such as painting.[22] Central to Stieglitz's ideas was the assumption that any ascribable photographic meaning resided entirely within the frame. The degree to which a given photograph was meaningful, therefore, depended upon the vision of the 'artist' photographer and the level of skill demonstrated in the execution of this vision during the construction of the image.[23] In his emphasis of these aspects, Stieglitz does point towards the importance of authorship, but only in a narrow sense that valorises a purified artistic vision. Allan Sekula has described Stieglitz's idea as 'the claim for the intrinsic significance of the photograph,' and more acerbically as 'the myth of the semantic autonomy of the photographic image.'[24]

While Stieglitz sought high art status for photography, other early modernists advocated for the camera's objective, democratic eye. Walter Benjamin, for example, saw in photography the unique potential to segment moments from everyday life. Benjamin also regarded the medium as a means by which self-representation became possible for the average person and not just the middle class.[25] Similarly, the celebrated French documentary photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson sought to 'seize the whole essence, in the confines of one single photograph, of some situation that was in the process of unfolding.'[26] More recently, Elaine Miller, although not a modernist as such, has nonetheless argued that photography can access primordial reality by disrupting 'the linear flow of time,' and thus estrange us from 'our ordinary sequence of experiencing, considering or recalling events, resulting in an insight into them that was previously unavailable or inaccessible, a photograph as primal phenomenon.'[27]

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[22] Alfred Stieglitz, "The Photo-Succession – Its Objectives," in *Stieglitz on Photography: His Selected Essays and Notes*, ed. Richard Whelan (Aperture), 156-9.
[23] Allan Sekula, "On the Invention of Photographic Meaning," in *Photography against the Grain: Essays and Photo Works 1976-1983* (Halifax: The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1984), 6-17.
[24] "Introduction," in *Photography against the Grain: Essays and Photoworks 1973-1983* (Halifax: The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1984), 5,8.
[25] Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (London: Jonathan Cape, 1970), 228-30.
[26] Henri Cartier-Bresson, *The Decisive Moment* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1952), 2.
[27] Elaine P. Miller, "Primal Phenomena and Photography," *Oxford Literary Review* 32, no. 2 (2010): 256.

In contrast to this perspective, the postmodernist critique put forward by commentators such as Sekula looks to undermine any perceived veracity of photographic representation by eschewing considerations of the photographer's intentions when analysing photographic imagery. For example, John Tagg argues that the various intermediary contingencies that impact upon the image making process nullify any connection to objective reality. Instead, the final product has meaning only as 'the production of a new and specific reality, the photograph, which becomes meaningful in certain transactions and has real effects, but which cannot refer or be referred to a pre-photographic reality as to a truth.'[28] Tagg's argument is one example from the larger postmodernist discourse, a discourse that John Roberts argues is based on the assumption that 'because the naturalistic or documentary image is constructed as *truth*...then the relationship between the photograph and the pre-photographic event is considered irrelevant, or beside the point.'[29]

Other postmodern critics have drawn on notions of textual meaning which, although anathema to the modernist sentiments of Stieglitz, nonetheless ultimately also deemphasise the contingencies that influence a photograph's creation in the same way that Stieglitz himself did. At the core of such critiques in the field of literature is Jacques Derrida's separation of text and author, most famously iterated in his claim that 'there is nothing outside the text.'[30] Instead, meaning derives from the interrelation between texts – the author is absent because the act of writing is undertaken precisely in the expectation of future absence (otherwise why put pen to paper?). In this way, meaning is deferred from the moment of creation. As Derrida observes:

> To write is to produce a mark...which my future disappearance will not in principle, hinder in its functioning...For a writing to be a writing it must continue to be readable even when what is called the author of the writing no longer

[28] John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1988), 3.
[29] John Roberts, *The Art of Interruption: Realism, Photography and the Everyday*, ed. John Taylor, The Critical Image (New York: Manchester University Press, 1998), 4.
[30] Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 158.

> answers for what is written…The situation of the writer is, concerning the written text, basically the same as that of the reader.[31]

Once written, the text is in a free-floating state, autonomous of its source and meaningful only in relation to other texts and not the motivations of the writer. In this sense, Derrida argues that textual meaning is *differánce,* always already deferred, contingent only upon intertextuality.

Building upon Derrida's argument, postmodern theorists of photography have emphasised the contextual nature of meaning in photographs in order to challenge modernist claims about photography's capacity to inscribe objective reality. This was the particular charge made by postmodernist critic Sekula against modernist photographers like Stieglitz.[32] As Susie Linfield has contended, beginning with the understandable scepticism of writers such as Susan Sontag regarding the truth-value of images, postmodern critiques of photography became increasingly hostile. [33] In general, postmodernists tended to overemphasise the power behind photography's unique form of representation. Specifically, it was argued that photography created the illusion of objective recording and thus photographic representations held a particular power to make subjective characterisation seem like objective reality. Further to this, postmodern critics emphasised the repressive function of institutional power behind image production, particularly as a tool of capitalism.[34] Linfield argues that, for postmodernists, 'to attack photography, especially high-modern photography, was to storm the bastions of modernism itself.'[35]

Contrary to this perspective, this thesis takes the view that we cannot ignore the authorial history from photographs in the same way that one might separate the author from the text. Although there are similarities between the written text

[31] Derrida, quoted in Simon Glendinning, "Language," in *Understanding Derrida*, ed. Jack Reynolds and Jonathan Roffe (New York: Continuum, 2004), 10.
[32] Sekula, "On the Invention of Photographic Meaning."
[33] Susie Linfield, "A Little History of Photography Criticism; or, Why Do Photography Critics Hate Photography?," in *The Cruel Radiance: Photography and Political Violence* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010), 5-13.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid., 8.

and the photograph in that each is produced in light of the author's intended future absence, the photograph, unlike the written text, always contains a visible reference to the moment of creation. The photograph is always *of* something, it tells us that some event happened or that something existed at a given moment in time and that the camera was there to record it. This, the photographic event, might be the drama of a political rally or something as innocuous as the still-life image of a flower. Whatever the event, the historicity of the act of creation stands before us in the image; the photograph is always at some level an act of recording. As Derrida points out: 'however artful the photographer may be…[there is always] a point where [the camera] passively records.'[36] The temporal referent to the moment of creation is unavoidably contained within the image; indeed, it is the nucleus of the photograph. In Derrida's words: 'the photograph marks a date. What irreducibly belongs to the photographic effect…is that the unique existence of the referent…is undeniably *posed* as the condition of the work.'[37] In this, he voices agreement with Roland Barthes, who argues in *Camera Lucida*, perhaps the most iconic of photography analysis texts, that:

> …the photograph is literally an emanation of the referent. From a real body, which was there, proceed radiations which ultimately touch me, who am here; the duration of the transmission is insignificant; the photograph of the missing being…will touch me like the delayed rays of a star.[38]

The indelible visual presence of the referent ties a photograph to the conditions of its origin in a way that distinguishes it from written text. Even Sekula, considered by Linfield and Roberts as hostile to a perception of objective truth in photography, states that 'every photographic image is a sign, above all, of someone's investment in the sending of a message.'[39]

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[36] Jacques Derrida, *Copy, Archive, Signature: A Conversation on Photography*, ed. Gerhard Richter, trans. Jeff Fort (California: Stanford University Press, 2010), 9.
[37] "Aletheia," *The Oxford Literary Review* 32, no. 2 (2010): 174.
[38] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (London: Vintage Books, 2000), 80-1.
[39] Sekula, "Introduction," 6.

To grasp the multiple meanings of an image, therefore, one must not only attend to the discursive or sociopolitical context in which the final image functions, but also consider the historical moment of its creation and try to discern its intended message. This is the case even when we concede that the 'meaning' of the photo exceeds or even subverts what the photographer may have intended. As Roberts argues, to consider the photograph as a bounded artefact disconnected from its own historicity – a history that includes decisions made by the photographer – and instead to take meaning only from either the intertextual context of the image or the manner in which the image functions discursively must lead to weakened analysis. The result is often 'the insertion of the photograph into an inflexible "regime of power", and concomitantly the weakening of the causal connection between the photograph and what it is actually *of*.'[40] Discounting the contingencies of an image's creation diminishes our understanding of it – the circumstances of a photograph's creation are just as instructive as the politics of its discursive function. As Andrew Benjamin notes:

> …the photograph as a locus of meaning is the result of specific effects and techniques. Were the latter not to form part of any account both of the production of the image and the image's interpretation, then such an account would run the risk of idealizing content. It would be as though the image's production was irrelevant to its work as an image.[41]

Put simply, photographs are historic objects with an unavoidably apparent connection to the temporal world. In order to grasp their full implications, it is imperative to consider the moment of creation in any analysis. This is particularly true of documentary photography. As we have seen in the case of the wartime image of the infant on a Shanghai railway platform (figure 5), the circumstances in which a given photograph is constructed can have powerful and lasting effects upon the way events, people, or societies are perceived and/or remembered.

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[40] Roberts, *The Art of Interruption: Realism, Photography and the Everyday*, 4.
[41] Andrew Benjamin, "What, in Truth, Is Photography? Notes after Kracauer," *Oxford Literary Review* 32, no. 2 (2010): 190.

The discussion thus far has argued that if we are to access the richness of meaning inherent in the photographic image then it is crucial that we pay close attention to the intentions of the photographer, broader discourses, and the unique contingencies of the moment of capture. It is, indeed, the tension between these aspects that produces an instability of meaning in the photograph. While the photographer may have a specific intention, the degree to which this can ever be achieved is contingent upon the material reality within which he or she works and is in constant negotiation with this reality. On this basis, we can understand why Richter argues that for Derrida 'to say…there is a strong affinity between deconstruction and photography would be to understate the matter'. [42] Deconstruction seeks to break down binaries that haunt academic discourse, binaries based on an inside/outside dynamic whereby the inside marginalises the outside, for example: West/East, Man/Women, Nature/Culture etc. [43] Deconstruction does so by paying close attention to the marginal aspects of a text, and by teasing out the free play of associations inherent within it, in order not so much to overturn the incumbent oppositional hierarchy of the binary as to destabilise any notion of essence or origin.[44] The photograph, in spite of its inescapable connection to the referent, is a nebulous dynamic of objective record and subjective creation.

Although Derrida agrees with Barthes' formulation of the irreducibility of the referent in the photograph, it is also clear the former was cognisant of a number of problems associated with this notion, given that any reference to irreducibility ostensibly posits some sort of essence. The idea of essence is anathema to deconstruction, which seeks to highlight the instability in the origins of texts. For this reason Derrida expresses a certain reticence with the idea of an ineffable photographic referent, replacing this instead with the notion of reference:

[42] Gerhard Richter, "Between Translation and Invention: The Photograph in Deconstruction," in *Copy, Archive, Signature: A Conversation on Photography* (California: Stanford University Press, 2010), XIX.
[43] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 42.
[44] Jack Reynolds, "Derrida, Jacques," Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, http://www.iep.utm.edu/derrida/#SH3c.

> In the end, photography seems to say (and to let this be dictated to itself): this took place, and it took place only once. It is the repetition of what has taken place only once. Reference, if not the referent, here seems to be ineffaceable…every original imprint is divided as an archive and preserves its reference, as with the original manuscript of a letter, or a signature, for example. What happens, in those cases, when photography reproduces this original without *giving to be seen* a singular moment of the world, when, for example a photocopy is made of this original signature?[45]

Here, Derrida seems to be making an argument based on the relative privileging of substrate (although used elsewhere more metaphorically, here 'substrate' is employed in its most literal sense as the particular physical surface upon which a photographic image is imprinted). By speculating on whether or not making a photocopy of the original print undermines its connection to referent, Derrida seems to assume that the print itself was the original in a technical sense. Yet the print itself is a copy, the first of many repetitions. If we were to privilege the verity of any particular substrate, it would need to be the photographic negative as the surface that was exposed in a directly physical sense to what is depicted in the image. It was the negative that directly received reflected light from the scene being photographed and preserved the outlines created. Anything that follows is a copy in the same sense as a photocopy – the only difference is the type of technical mediation required. To make a print from a negative requires a timed projection of the image onto photosensitive paper, which is then processed through a series of chemical baths. The process of photocopying, on the other hand, is more direct, although its mimetic accuracy is significantly reduced.

By questioning the difference between an original written manuscript and a photographic negative in terms of its connection to 'a singular moment of the world,' Derrida does not necessarily completely discount the photograph's unique connection to its referent. Instead, he sets out to challenge Barthes' seemingly unequivocal claim in *Camera Lucida* concerning the unmediated veracity of photography. In several passages of this text, Barthes seems to

[45] Derrida, *Copy, Archive, Signature: A Conversation on Photography*, 3-4.

privilege the connection between the real world object and the photographic image. For instance, early in the book he makes the following statement: 'The Photograph belongs to that class of laminated objects whose two leaves cannot be separated without destroying them both: the windowpane and the landscape.'[46] The implication is that what we see in the photograph is the same irrefutable reality as the physical landscape we see outside our window. This impression is strengthened by other statements in the book, such as: 'the Photograph is indifferent to all intermediaries: it does not invent; it is authentication itself' and further, that 'Photography never lies: or rather, it can lie as to the meaning of the thing, being by nature *tendentious*, never as to its existence.' [47] His acknowledgement of tendentious meaning aside, these statements seem to reflect a somewhat naïve and uncritical acceptance of photography as unmediated truth. However, as Margaret Olin has pointed out, in *Camera Lucida* Barthes intentionally writes from the position of the 'naïve viewer,' who is 'perhaps everyone when photography enters the delicate sphere of human relations.'[48] This narrative position is adopted in order to understand the peculiar representative power photography can exhibit: 'whatever it grants to vision and whatever its manner, a photograph is always invisible: it is not it that we see…the referent adheres. And this singular adherence makes it very difficult to focus on Photography.' [49] In other words, the indexical function of the camera, the knowledge that it always to some extent 'passively records' (as Derrida puts it) makes it difficult for the viewer to remember the intermediary influence of the photographer. Initially at least, we do not see the photograph as a representation but as the thing itself. This, of course, is the source of the outrage over photographic manipulation.

Derrida, while not completely denying the connection to a temporal origin, wants to challenge Barthes' emphasis on the referent as a unique locus of meaning and

[46] Roland Barthes, "The Photographic Message," in *A Roland Barthes Reader*, ed. Susan Sontag (London: Vintage, 2000), 6.
[47] *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, 87.
[48] Margaret Olin, "Touching Photographs: Roland Barthes's "Mistaken" Identity," in *Photography Degree Zero: Reflection on Roland Barthes's Camera Lucida*, ed. Geoffrey Batchen (London: The MIT Press, 2009), 6.
[49] Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, 6.

on the singularity of the moment said to have been captured in a photograph. His question as to whether different modes of duplication and/or substrates might weaken what Barthes' interprets as an unbreakable connection between signifier and signified is intended to draw our attention to the various intermediary factors involved in the photograph's production. As evident from the discussion around digital manipulation in photojournalism, Derrida's emphasis on the different mediations of technology is especially salient. In particular, Derrida wonders whether the photographic medium has been fundamentally changed by the advent of digital photography. Specifically, has this new technology disrupted photography's connection with the referent, and if so: 'does what we have available to us now deserve the name photography?'[50] Derrida is undoubtedly referring here to the fact that digital cameras use a digital sensor rather than film, a recording surface that is infinitely erasable, as opposed to a negative that can record only once. The relatively tenuous nature of digital capture leads Derrida to wonder whether '*recording* an image would become inseparable from *producing* an image and would therefore lose the reference to an external and unique referent.'[51] Although we might grant Derrida's point that something has changed in the digital process concerning the nature of a singular moment of reflected light (for reflected light is what illustrates the scene onto both sensor and film), we might also question the sanctity Derrida infers is inherent in the negative, which is, after all, not a pure medium but an item manufactured according to prevailing aesthetic tastes and the logic of market capitalism. It is a stable surface, in that it records only once, but not a neutral one. Mediation has occurred even in advance of image capture.

Derrida's seeming trust in the negative over the digital sensor as a more truthful surface upon which to record reflects a certain naivety that is in fact analogous to that which Barthes sought to illustrate on the part of the viewer in *Camera Lucida*. Yet Derrida goes on to acknowledge this naivety by observing that the performativity of an image – that is, the extent to which the image is produced rather than simply recorded – 'was perhaps always the case without our realizing

[50] Derrida, *Copy, Archive, Signature: A Conversation on Photography*, 5.
[51] Ibid.

it.'[52] Derrida's acknowledgment points to the larger notion, discussed above, that the photograph has always been subjectively 'performed' by the photographer as much as objectively recorded. The advent of digital technology has simply made this more apparent to the average person. For Derrida, this knowledge has important implications: it 'obliges us more than ever …to reconsider the supposed referentiality or passivity in relation to the referent from the very beginning, the very first epoch, so to speak, of photography.'[53] In other words, regardless of the technology used, it is important to consider that the various mediations introduced by the photographer have the potential to 'modify reference itself, [and to] introduce multiplicity, divisibility, substitutivity, replaceability.'[54] This is not to deny the irreducibility of a certain reality that is captured and presented in the photograph, as some critics have done. Rather, it is importantly a call for us to think about how the actively constructed nature of a photograph interfaces with the passive recording that always takes place.

This interplay between active construction and passive recording is unique to photography. The act of taking a photograph is a movement in which human intention and the contingencies of material and historical reality meet. In this meeting, as Derrida notes, 'activity and passivity touch together or are articulated along a differential border. This is the very movement of the trace: a movement that is a priori photographic.'[55] This truth-value that is distinct to the photograph, therefore, is not wholly constituted by the aesthetic vision, or genius, of the photographer, as argued by modernists such as Stieglitz or even Cartier-Bresson. In Stieglitz's case this view privileges the intentions behind a photographic act over all else, attributing meaning only to an idealised set of aesthetics. In the case of Cartier-Bresson, everything is placed upon the skill of the photographer in capturing some purportedly transcendent reality, the 'essence' of a scene. Both perspectives assume that all meaning is reduced to what is contained within the four borders of the image. This reduction in turn severs, or at least conceals, what Barthes entitles 'the umbilical cord' that connects the image to the real world

[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid., 7.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid., 17.

object that was photographed.[56] Nor does meaning originate, as some postmodern theorists suggest, solely from the photograph's status as a text, from its status within a nebulous system of signifiers. The modernist view implies a fixed, stable, truth whereas the overemphasis on intertextual meaning leads to an endless variety of possible interpretations that are unconnected to the temporal origins of the image. As opposed to the above two perspectives, this thesis takes the view that, if we are to attribute any kind of essence to the photograph (the problematic nature of the term 'essence' notwithstanding), we would see it located precisely in the tenuous interplay between the intractable contingencies of the 'real' world and the intentions and biases of the photographer. These two elements are not binary opposites but in constant negotiation, an unstable centre of meaning that in turn produces unstable, and thus complex, representations.

This instability should not, as noted above, be thought of as a weakness in photography's capacity for representation, however, but as a unique strength, particularly when the lens is turned upon human society. When the referent – the physical and temporal reality represented within the image – is understood to be in constant tension with the photographer's intentions, the photographic image emerges as a rich source for analysis. As will be demonstrated throughout this thesis, the contingencies of historical and material reality continually temper the photographer's intentions, both impinging upon and influencing their intended message. Because the viewer is always confronted with a visual reminder of the moment of capture, she or he is subsequently led to consider how the broader sociopolitical context of that moment might have informed the production of a given image. Similarly, the unique contingencies of the precise moment in which the photograph was taken can also be informative. For example, unplanned aspects such as a subject's unanticipated and spontaneous expression or gesture, or else details unnoticed by the photographer, might all be part of the final image, destabilising the intended message. Each of the above contingent factors contributes to the ontological ambiguity or instability of the photograph, leading to an ambiguity of meanings in which representational 'truths' become slippery and multidimensional or even undermined. Such ambiguity is fitting to the

[56] Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, 81.

representation of an entity as complex as human society, in which the best attempts at categorisation are similarly beset by ambiguity and in which normative designations of class, gender, and cultural identity consistently evade fixity.

The Relationship between Photography, Place, Space, and Identity

The tension between material reality and performativity in the photograph is analogous to the tensions that underlie notions of place and space. Although in-depth theoretical approaches often regard these as separate concepts, they can nonetheless be considered to be in constant negotiation with each other. The humanist geographer Yi-Fu Tuan notes that 'in experience, the meaning of space often merges with that of place.' [57] Space is normally associated with openness and freedom, and place considered static, a source of stability.[58] In other words, space is nebulous, fluid, and open in the sense that its potentiality seems boundless; it has a certain indefinability that encourages the inscription of meaning. Further, ideas of space are not necessarily tied to geographical realities, but can at times exist only in the mind (such as in the notion of discursive space). Place, on the other hand, is more firmly anchored to material reality in that it is associated with the specifics of geographical location and historical context. It is this association with geography and history that gives place a certain – however putative – concreteness or sense of being anchored. Yet, as Tuan also argues, the seemingly opposed concepts of space and place are in fact reliant upon each other: 'from the security and stability of place we are aware of the openness, freedom, and threat of space, and vice versa.'[59] In Tuan's characterisation, the association with mobility is in fact a pivotal defining factor for both space and place: 'if we think of space as that which allows movement, then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place.'[60] This formulation is particularly useful in terms of the documentary style of photography discussed in this thesis. Each of the photographers included

[57] Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 6.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.

produces a sense of place in his or her images largely by moving through space, often in a quite literal sense of carrying the camera through a designated area, and pausing occasionally to photograph. It is the nature of photography that this pause is made permanent, inscribed onto film or digital sensor. In this sense, photography, as performed by the photographers discussed below is the result of a dialogue between space and place.

Similarly, the photography of place involves a relation between material reality and performativity that is fluid, in constant negotiation. This is because, as Melissa Miles notes: 'Place can be understood broadly as a meaningful location tied to a sense of being in the world,' yet, – like space – place 'cannot be reduced to either physical entity or an idea. In this way, place is also both "real" and imagined – a fusion of material form and meaning.'[61] Although in comparison to the open and fluid nature of space, place might be considered as static and anchored, it is neither predetermined nor passive. To define place in this way would be to set up unhelpful binaries between place and space. The consequence of such a bifurcation suggests, as Miles argues, 'a misleading division between the natural and the cultural, objective and subjective, material and mental, and real and imagined.' [62] Instead, space and place are intertwined, and thus the photographer does not simply capture a predetermined, truthful 'place' any more than he or she documents any other type of fixed reality in the world. Rather, 'in making images, the photographer actively helps to produce place.'[63]

Miles' statement is usefully understood in the broader concept of 'imaginative geography,' a term employed by Edward Said to characterise the way in which the 'East' was conceptualised as a place in Orientalist literature and art. Said notes this way of seeing as a 'universal practice of designating in one's mind a familiar space which is "ours" and an unfamiliar space beyond "ours" which is "theirs,"' a practice which '*can be* entirely arbitrary.'[64] However, such seemingly

[61] Melissa Miles, *The Language of Light and Dark: Light and Place in Australian Photography* (London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015), 18.
[62] Ibid., 19.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 2003), 54.

neat divisions are inevitably problematic, because, as Said himself observes, 'often the sense in which someone feels himself to be not-foreign is based on a very unrigorous idea of what is "out there," beyond one's own territory.'[65]

The indivisible relation between space and place is in many ways comparable to the tension between material reality and image construction that haunts photography. Just as imaginings of space often butt up against the material realities of a given place, so do the photographer's authorial intentions and the discourses that inform these intentions run into the contingent realities of what is being photographed. It is therefore perhaps unsurprising that photography has deep historical links to the practice of geography, and further, that the partisan and often unreliable tendencies of the geographical imagination have sometimes been obscured by the medium's seeming veracity. Discussing nineteenth century photographs produced by institutions to facilitate settlement policy, for example, Joan Schwartz and James Ryan argue that the camera became an integral part of geographical survey and thus the production of place:

> Made practicable at a time when vision and knowledge came to be inextricably linked, the photograph offered a means of observing, describing, studying, ordering, classifying and, thereby, knowing the world. The rhetoric of transparency and truth that came to surround the photograph enabled it to take up a position between observer and material reality. There, photographic facts generated meaning, and gave rise to action. There, 'photographic seeing' became a surrogate for first-hand observation. There, the photograph served as a site where broader ideas about landscape and identity were negotiated. In these ways, geography and photography became partners in picturing place.[66]

The photographs discussed in this thesis were not created to facilitate settlement policy, nor do they completely accord with the conditions of colonial knowledge production referred to by Said. Nonetheless, it is the intersection of photography,

[65] Ibid.
[66] Joan M. Schwarz and James R. Ryan, "Introduction: Photography and the Geographical Imagination," in *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination*, ed. Joan M. Schwarz and James R. Ryan (London: I.B. Taurus, 2009), 8.

identity, and place that is in many ways the foundation of the discussion that follows. Specifically, all of the images featured in the thesis to some extent demonstrate the way that photographic representations of place became an important way for photographers to work through issues surrounding identity. In this sense, the first three chapters of this thesis look at photographic representations of Tokyo firstly as a site of Allied bombing, then as an occupied territory and, finally, as a location in which the hyper rationalised forces of capitalist modernity came together. The three subsequent chapters discuss the representation of Japan's rural and natural spaces as the obverse of the city and thus supposedly free of the alienating aspects of modernity. The final two chapters examine representations of Japan's US military base towns, sites which, with their liminal and hybrid nature, are particularly resistant to fixed notions of identity. Examining photographic representations of each featured place helps us to understand the complex and often intertwined issues surrounding identity – in all its guises that include the cultural, national, individual, and gendered.

The Ambiguities of Identity in Japan's Postwar Places and Spaces

The various depictions of place in the work of each photographer featured in the thesis provide insights into the experience of life in Japan's postwar society. Wartime firebombing on an unprecedented scale, culminating in the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, destroyed many of Japan's urban centres. Millions of young men were sent to fight in a largely unwinnable war, while citizens at home were co-opted into the war effort in a variety of ways that included the production of arms and munitions. The end of the war saw occupation by a foreign power and the chaos of repatriation as millions of soldiers and civilians returned from the battlefields and former colonies.[67] The experience of occupation was particularly traumatic, although many Japanese also welcomed the Americans as a counter to the oppression imposed on the country by the wartime regime. (For others, however, the continued American military presence, particularly in Okinawa, has meant that occupation has never

[67] A detailed discussion of this process can be found in Lori Watt, *When Empire Comes Home: Repatriation and Reintegration in Postwar Japan* (Cambridge; London: Harvard University Asia Center, 2009).

ended.) Alongside the mental recovery from the war, the formal departure of the Allied Forces was followed by a rebuilding and reshaping of Japanese society of such speed and breadth as to be comparable to the swift modernisation that occurred during the Meiji era. In the postwar era, although monetary wealth was (or at least appeared to be) more equitably distributed, the rise in average disposable income came with the emergence of a saturating consumer culture.

This type of culture became synonymous with what many felt was the 'Americanisation' of Japanese society. Although the spread of American consumer culture was to some extent a global phenomenon, in Japan such a spread was in many ways inseparable from the idea of modernity itself. Many 1960s Japanese intellectuals were alarmed by the breakneck pace of postwar economic development and feared for the very fabric of Japanese society. Yumiko Iida contends that the emergence of this group of intellectuals amounted to a second coming of the prewar Japanese Romanticism movement, which culminated in the 1942 'Overcoming Modernity' conference.[68] This wartime assembly was a forum for Japanese intellectuals to discuss the difficulties of creating a Japanese modernity that avoided being a slavish imitation of the West and the significance and meaning of Japan initiating the Pacific War.[69] At that gathering, prominent Romanticist, Kamei Katsuichirō, likened the permeation of Western-style rationality into Japanese intellectual discourse to a 'disease' that needed excising.[70] A central feature of this wartime Romantic movement had been the 'desire for an alternative time and place outside the "logic of civilization" and the progressive history of modernity, a nostalgia for an imagined past and a utopian hope for an alternative future.'[71] Like this earlier movement, 1960s Romanticism also voiced protest against 'excessive rationality, Westernized lifestyles, American cultural hegemony, and the loss of tradition or the sense of beauty'.[72] Mishima Yukio (1925-1970), the celebrated writer and public intellectual, was a

[68] Yumiko Iida, *Rethinking Identity in Modern Japan: Nationalism as Aesthetics* (London: Routledge, 2002), 4.
[69] Harry Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity: History, Culture, and Community in Interwar Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 34.
[70] Ibid., 35.
[71] Iida, *Rethinking Identity in Modern Japan: Nationalism as Aesthetics*, 4.
[72] Ibid., 127.

central figure in this postwar Romanticism movement. By the 1960s, Mishima had become so concerned about the cultural impoverishment of modern Japanese society that he called for a return to the moral absolutism of the emperor system.[73] Mishima's journey on this intellectual path culminated in 1970 with what Karatani Kōjin has characterised as the ultimately hollow and anachronistic act of *seppuku*, ritual suicide, after a failed attempt to exhort Japan's Self Defence Forces to join him in conducting a *coup d'état.*[74]

Miriam Silverberg has noted that it is deeply problematic to simply portray Japanese modernisation as an imposition of cultural norms by an active America onto a passive Japan.[75] Nevertheless, a central characteristic of Japanese modernisation discourse has been the association of modernity with Westernisation. This conflation of modernisation and westernisation has furthermore often been expressed in notions of place: cities like Tokyo become the Americanised foreign, while rural and natural spaces represent 'Japan.' Marilyn Ivy has noted this tendency in the term *furusato*, a Japanese term evoked by urbanites to denote their rural origin, which implies the idea of home in a cultural as well as literal sense.[76] This notion is also summed up in a comment by the photographer Tōmatsu (whose Okinawan and other American base town photographs are the subject of two chapters in this thesis) to the effect that: 'I did not come to Okinawa, but returned to Japan and I will not return to Tokyo, I will be returning to America.'[77]

An emphasis on modernity as a foreign and exterior space is perhaps understandable for a country which, under the Tokugawa Shogunate, had been

[73] Tetsuo Najita, "On Culture and Technology in Postmodern Japan," in *Postmodernism and Japan*, ed. Masao Miyoshi and H. D. Harootunian, *Post-Contemporary Interventions* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1989), 15-16.
[74] Kojin Karatani, "The Discursive Space of Modern Japan," in *History and Repetition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 80-2.
[75] Miriam Silverberg, "Constructing a New Cultural History of Postwar Japan," *Boundary* 18, no. 3 (1991): 65.
[76] Marilyn Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing: Modernity, Phantasm, Japan* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 103-4.
[77] Shōmei Tōmatsu, *Taiyō no enpitsu : Okinawa, Umi to Sora to Shima to Hitobito Soshite tōnan Ajia e* (*The Pencil of the Sun, Okinawa & S.E.Asia*), Kamera Mainichi Bessatsu. (Tōkyō: Mainichi Shinbunsha, 1975), n.p.g.

isolated for two hundred years and which then modernised at a furious rate. Further, because the intimidating encounter with the military power of US Naval Officer Matthew Perry's 'black ships' was a formative aspect of Japan's modernisation, modernity was often perceived as a traumatic and threatening Western product. This statement is as true for postwar times as it was for the Meiji era. In reference to Mishima, Iida reminds us of the folly of dismissing the writer's 'preoccupations as stemming from a tortured self's impetuous search for the symbolic meaning of the nation.'[78] Noting how 'the general well-being of the national space does affect the subject,' she argues that 'Mishima's despair and nihilism were both symbolic and symptomatic of the state of Japanese society.'[79]

While the photographers discussed in this thesis by no means subscribed to the kind of conservatism embodied by Mishima, each was similarly concerned about the direction Japanese society had taken in the postwar era. It is this concern, and the fact that the work of each photographer is to some extent a response to postwar modernisation, that unites the otherwise diverse selection of work presented in the chapters that follow. More pointedly, each body of images suggests an attempt to grapple with what it means for a Japanese subject to be a member of a society seemingly dominated by the intertwined forces of modernity and America. A useful way to consider the impact of these intertwined forces is to examine the Nobel Prize for Literature acceptance speeches by two of Japan's modern literary giants, Kawabata Yasunari (1899-1972) and Ōe Kenzaburo (b. 1935). While Kawabata's words appeal to an ahistorical Japanese 'essence,' perhaps the same essence sought by a number of the photographers considered here, the words of the younger Ōe concede the impossibility of such an appeal, invoking the notion of ambiguity instead. In this sense, Ōe's speech is particularly relevant to the work of the photographers to be discussed. It will be useful to consider the two speeches in tandem, however, in order to understand the manner in which Ōe gently subverts the essence that Kawabata so much reveres, advocating instead for a Japanese identity that is fluid and not only not fixed, but not able to be fixed.

[78] Iida, *Rethinking Identity in Modern Japan: Nationalism as Aesthetics*, 7.
[79] Ibid.

In his 1968 speech, entitled 'Japan, the Beautiful, and Myself' ('*Utsukushii nihon no watashi - sono josetsu'*), Kawabata appeals to an idea of Japanese identity that is planted firmly in the distant past of the Heian period (794-1185). Noting that this was a time when Chinese influences were at their height, Kawabata suggests that it was when 'the culture of T'ang China [was] absorbed and Japanized,' that 'a peculiarly Japanese beauty' emerged.[80] With a power shift from the Emperor's court to the 'military aristocracy' at the end of the era, the 'high tide of Japanese court culture' receded.[81] Through an exposition of selected poetry of that era, Kawabata characterises 'the very essence of Japan' as a deep connection with the natural world. This connection is exemplified by the practice of meditation in the tradition of Zen Buddhism, the goal of which is to reach a state of 'nothingness.'[82] Kawabata defines this notion in opposition to that of 'the West,' which denotes absence: 'it is rather the reverse, a universe of the spirit in which everything communicates freely with everything, transcending bounds, limitless.'[83] Although in his 1994 speech, examined in more detail below, Ōe, ironically, characterised Kawabata's approach as a 'bold and straightforward self-assertion,' he clearly had little inclination to cling to deliberately vague ideas from the distant past that valorised a particular Japanese 'spirit' over the 'nihilism' of the West.

In many ways Kawabata's was perhaps the same binary investment in East and West that fuelled the purified notions of Japanese identity that drove Japan's aggressive prewar imperialism. This notion of identity was unambiguously outlined in the government document entitled *Kokutai no Hongi* (*The Unique National Polity*) which argued that the embrace of the modern west had led to a 'deadlock of individualism' and to 'a season of ideological confusion and crisis.'[84] The solution was for citizens to realise their essential 'historical' selfhood as

[80] Yasunari Kawabata, "Japan, the Beautiful, and Myself," (1968), http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1968/kawabata-lecture.html.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Japan Ministry of Education, "The Unique National Polity (*Kokutai No Hongi*)," in *Japan 1931-1945: Militarism, Fascism, Japanism?*, ed. Ivan Morris (Boston: D.C. Heath and Company, 1963), 47.

Japanese, which meant 'the casting aside of our little selves' and submitting instead to the 'fountainhead of all energy' in the form of the Emperor.[85] This idea of identity propagated by the wartime state was an important aspect of its military aggression in China, the Pacific, and Southeast Asia, as it justified violent sacrifice in the name of the Emperor. While Kawabata sought to distance himself from this violence by appealing to traditions of the Heian era and to 'the deep quiet of the Japanese spirit'[86] that he saw as emanating from that time, he nonetheless replicated the notion of a unique Japan that drove prewar and wartime militarist excess.

Ōe's 1994 speech entitled 'Japan, the Ambiguous, and Myself,' ('*Aimai na Nihon no watashi'*) problematises the idea of an essential Japan, whether aesthetic or militarist, offered by his predecessor. Ōe, in fact, directly rebuts any fixed notion of identity that apparently exists outside of modernity and is in differentiation to the West. This is immediately evident in his avoidance of distinctly Japanese influences such as Heian era poetic tropes as formative inspiration in favour of two Western novels, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and *The Wonderful Adventures of Nils.* Ōe further differentiates himself by confessing that: 'rather than with Kawabata my compatriot who stood here twenty-six years ago, I feel more spiritual affinity with the Irish poet William Butler Yeats.'[87] By aligning himself with Western literature, Ōe, the French literature graduate with a strong interest also in American narrative, signals a notion of identity that, rather than bounded by a narrow local timeframe or philosophical tradition, is inseparable from modernity and from contact with the West. This is confirmed unequivocally by the declaration that, 'as someone living in the present world such as this one and sharing bitter memories of the past imprinted on my mind, I cannot utter in unison with Kawabata the phrase "Japan, the Beautiful, and Myself".'[88] Instead, Ōe offers the idea of 'Japan, the Ambiguous, and Myself,'[89] a notion informed, among other things, by the writer's acceptance of Japanese war responsibility,

[85] Ibid., 49.
[86] Kawabata, "Japan, the Beautiful, and Myself".
[87] Kenzaburō Ōe, "Japan, the Ambiguous, and Myself," (1994), http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1994/oe-lecture.html.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Ibid.

something that was notably absent from Kawabata's script. For Ōe, it is ambiguity, with all its contradictions, that best defines the Japanese experience of the modern era:

> My observation is that after one hundred and twenty years of modernisation since the opening of the country, present-day Japan is split between two opposite poles of ambiguity…This ambiguity which is so powerful and penetrating that it splits both the state and its people is evident in various ways. The modernisation of Japan has been orientated toward learning from and imitating the West. Yet Japan is situated in Asia and has firmly maintained its traditional culture. The ambiguous orientation of Japan drove the country into the position of an invader in Asia. On the other hand, the culture of modern Japan, which implied being thoroughly open to the West has at the same time impeded understanding by the West. What was more, Japan was driven into isolation from other Asian countries, not only politically but also socially and culturally.[90]

Ultimately, it is the notion of ambiguity, as exemplified in Ōe's speech, and the relationship between ambiguity and identity, that underpins the analysis of the photographs presented in this thesis. Given Japan's unique and complex social trajectory since the Meiji Restoration, it is difficult to imagine how one might sustain the singular and ahistorical notion of cultural identity advanced by Kawabata. Ōe's idea of Japan's often contradictory place in the world, on the other hand, opens up possibilities for identity to intersect with space and place. This later will become evident in the interplay between the urban and rural that features in many of the photographs to be discussed. Ambiguity, furthermore, permits acknowledging the complicated dynamics of gendered power relations and of relations related to race. These latter relations will become particularly evident in the photographs featured in Chapters 7 and 8 taken in United States military base towns in Japan and particularly Okinawa. At the heart of all of these seeming binaries we find a tension between imagination and material

[90] Ibid.

reality – the desires and longings of the subject are in negotiation with the contingencies of historical, political, social, and economic realities.

Structure of the Thesis

By analysing the work of seven different Japanese photographers, this thesis will demonstrate how each represents the ambiguities of identity in postwar Japan and the manner in which this identity connects inextricably with notions of place. To further profile the ambiguous connection between place and identity, the chapters are divided according to three distinct physical spheres: urban, rural, and military base towns. The first three chapters focus on representations of Tokyo, charting a trajectory from the immediate aftermath of war through to the height of Japan's economic boom. Chapter one looks at Hayashi's *Kasutori Jidai* (*Days in the Dregs*), a series of images taken in the immediate postwar decade that emphasise the precarious nature of life in Tokyo during that time. Hayashi's intention seems to be to provide a reasonably straightforward depiction of hope and endurance in the face of extreme hardship. The vagaries of photographic representation, however, infuse this depiction with complex references to both hope and despair, while also confirming the persistence of gendered power hierarchies in postwar Japan. Chapter two discusses Takanashi's series *Tōkyōjin* (*Tokyoites*), a series of images that depict life in the public spaces of Tokyo. Produced in the 1960s, the time of Japan's high speed economic growth, the images convey the sense of alienation that results when individuals are subject to the forces of late capitalism. Chapter three considers Naitō's *Tōkyō*: *Toshi no yami o genshi suru* (*Tokyo: Hallucinating on the Darkness of the City*) through the prism of Walter Benjamin's critique of modernity. The chapter particularly invokes Benjamin's idea of the dialectic image to analyse the coalescence of the archaic and modern in Naitō's work. These images destabilise neat boundaries of past/present and, while presenting the destructive aspects of Japan's postwar modernity, nonetheless also locate a glimmer of hope in Tokyo's urban margins.

Signalling a shift towards the depiction of rural and traditional life in Japan, chapter four analyses Hamaya's depiction of a Niigata mountain village in the *Yukiguni* (*Snow Country*) photo series. Hamaya's images of life in this remote site

during the 1940s seemingly portray an idealised and authentic Japanese life connected to nature and existing outside the contingencies and complications of modernity. Ultimately, however, the images reveal the photographer's own ambiguous place in Japan's modernity and his thorough embeddedness within the very worldview he tries to transcend. Chapter five discusses Suda's depiction of traditional festivals in the series entitled *Fushi Kaden* (*Transmission of the Flower of Acting Style*).[91] While, like Hamaya, Suda looks to record a putatively authentic Japanese identity outside modernity, he locates this less in any bounded space or time and more in the interstitial moments of daily life. Suda's work speaks to the complexity inherent in the act of cataloguing, or archiving, the traditional. It will be argued that such an endeavour is, in fact, the discursive erasure of that which is recorded, and more concerned with the future than the past.

Chapter six and chapter seven feature the work of Tōmatsu. More than any other photographer in this thesis, Tōmatsu grappled throughout his career with the complexities of postwar Japan. The thesis, therefore, looks in detail at two distinct aspects of his work, namely his depictions of Okinawa and of 'America' in Japan. Chapter Six considers Tōmatsu's depiction of Okinawa's natural spaces in the *Taiyō no enpitsu* (*The Pencil of the Sun*) photobook. Like those of Hamaya and Suda, Tōmatsu's representations are infused with a modern centre worldview leading to an idealisation, in accordance with discourses prominent at the time, of the island chain's natural spaces. This idealisation, however, is in constant tension with Tōmatsu's deep knowledge of and sympathy for Okinawa's experience as a site of exploitation in the modern era by both Japan and the United States.

Chapter seven, while still focussing on Tōmatsu's work, is the first of two chapters discussing depictions of American military base town life in Japan and Okinawa. In the context of ambiguity, the base town is a highly significant site, encompassing as it does a meeting of Japanese and American culture. These towns are also ongoing reminders of Japan's war defeat. In Okinawa, what we

[91] Suda's title references an old text on cultural performance.

might call the 'primary ambiguity' of the base town is exacerbated by the complexity of the power relations that operate between America, mainland Japan, and the island prefecture. Chapter seven looks at Tōmatsu's *Chewing Gum and Chocolate*, concentrating on the photographer's depictions of America and Americans during the 1960s and 70s. Rather than simply presenting a simplistic portrayal of neocolonial domination, Tōmatsu's images make clear the way in which the encounter between individual American and individual Japanese complicates the idea of a monolithic America. Chapter eight, the final analysis chapter, continues the theme of interpersonal relations between Americans and Japanese through a discussion of the intimate portrayal of the relationships between Okinawan women and African American servicemen in Ishikawa's *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa* (*Hot Days in Okinawa*) series of photographs. Since, unlike the mainland Japanese male photographer Tōmatsu, Ishikawa is a woman from Okinawa, her images to some extent give an insider perspective. While the impact of this is lessened by her role as documenter, this twin perspective results in her work bridging the binaries of public and private, thereby producing a transgressive portrayal of Okinawan/Japanese women and African American men that collapses the gendered and racial discourses pertaining to interracial sexual relations that operated in Japan at the time. Taken as a whole, the images in this thesis demonstrate how the instabilities inherent in photographic representations make this a highly fitting medium by means of which to consider the complex interrelation of place, identity, and the forces of modernity in the society of postwar Japan.

CHAPTER ONE:

Coarse and Smooth, Dark and Light: the Precariousness of Postwar Tokyo in Hayashi Tadahiko's *Kasutori Jidai*

Introduction

Produced between 1946 and 1955, Hayashi Tadahiko's photo series entitled *Kasutori Jidai* (usually translated as *Days in the Dregs*) [92] depicts life in the urban spaces of Tokyo during the decade following Japan's surrender. This was arguably the period during which the people of Japan most acutely felt the effects of wartime defeat. The immediate postwar era was a time of desperation for many in Japan, with high rates of homelessness and basic resources in short supply. The US Occupation, which began immediately following the war's end and which officially ceased on April 28, 1952, made an indelible although complex impression on many members of Japanese society. Despite the suffering that resulted from Allied wartime firebombing and the subsequent humiliation of foreign occupation, the period was also one of considerable optimism. Many in Japan now felt free of the oppressive militarist regime that had driven the country into unwinnable wars with China and the Allies. Covering a wide variety of subject matter, Hayashi's *Kasutori Jidai* attempts to capture this paradoxical sense of both despair and hope.

The duality of this representation perhaps expresses Hayashi's own experience of the war and its aftermath. While undoubtedly enduring hardships, the postwar decade was also a time in which the photographer flourished professionally. Hayashi was born in Tokuyama, Yamaguchi Prefecture, in 1918 as the son of a family that had operated a photographic studio for several generations. After graduating from Tokuyama Commercial School he took an apprenticeship at a photography studio in Ashiya, Hyōgo Prefecture. In 1939 he

[92] For instance, in Luisa Orto, "Tadahiko Hayashi," in *The History of Japanese Photography*, ed. John Junkerman (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).

studied at the Oriental School of Photography in Tokyo. Already beginning to gain recognition as a photographer, Hayashi was instrumental in the formation of several photographic organisations around that time. In the 1940s, at the height of Japan's war with China, he was attached to the Japanese Embassy in Beijing and involved in setting up the North China Public Relations Photography Association. Later, he went on to receive many accolades, including the annual award of the Photographic Society of Japan in both 1971 and 1978 and the Prime Minister's Prize in 1972.[93] He is best known for his photographs of Tokyo in the immediate postwar and also for his portraits of Japanese literati.

The *Kasutori Jidai* images are resonant with the chaotic aftermath of war and the tensions of an occupied city. In particular, material selected for analysis in this chapter speaks to a complex mixture of hope, despair, and the instability of a discursive environment in which old and new hierarchies of power – including gender hierarchies – were intertwined. Working as a freelance photographer producing images in the context of the playful content and fleeting nature of the *kasutori* magazine culture, Hayashi did not necessarily set out to problematise the scenes he recorded. This is evidenced by his largely simple and clearly defined method of composition and the distinctive tonal contrast that results from working in the natural light of the morning or afternoon. This use of contrast and lighting gives his images instant visual impact.

Notwithstanding the photographer's seeming lack of specific intent for complex representations, the images in *Kasutori Jidai* still provide the viewer with a highly nuanced portrayal of the tension and precariousness that defined life in Tokyo in the decade following defeat. This nuance stems from the ambiguous nature of photographic representation, in which the intractable contingencies of material reality often works against the intentions of the photographer. In particular, even those images which appear to be designed largely to convey messages of hope are beset with tension arising from contextual details within the frame that speak, literally and figuratively, of the violence of war. Elsewhere, historical details, either directly pictured or implied by the time and place of

[93] Ibid., 341.

capture, similarly complicate a singular interpretation of the material viewed. These aspects of historical reality are present because of the recording function of the camera, which picks up details that disrupt the apparent creative intentions of the photographer. In turn, this disruption brings our attention to the discursive environment in which the images were produced, and particularly how, in Hayashi's images, hopes for liberation in postwar Japan repeatedly ran up against extant and newly formed power hierarchies.

The Persistence of Hope in a Ruined Landscape

The majority of the photographs in *Kasutori Jidai* originally appeared in the numerous so-called *kasutori* magazines that flourished during the few years after the war. The images were first published as a collection in 1980 and again with additional images in 2007. The following analysis draws on images that appear in the later 2007 publication. The term *kasutori* here refers to the cheaply made drinks that were the only form of affordable alcohol for most people, and was applied as a descriptor to the magazines due to their transitory nature. *Kasutori* drinks were deemed so toxic that one could only consume two or three of them in an evening. While not necessarily toxic in content, the magazines, like the number of *kasutori* drinks able to be consumed, often only lasted two or three issues.[94] In a manner similar to the alcoholic preparations for which they were named, the *kasutori* magazines were seen to provide fleeting and intense diversion to those struggling through the aftermath of war.

The *Kasutori Jidai* images were not necessarily intended to become a cohesive series at the time that each was produced. This is clear not only by the piecemeal nature in which they were originally published, but also in the sheer variety of subject matter presented in the 2007 publication to which this analysis refers. As a record of the immediate postwar period, the collection naturally includes images of hardship amongst the ruins. There are also portraits of movie stars and authors, in addition to Tokyo nightlife scenes. What underpins most images – except perhaps the aforementioned portraits – in this seemingly incongruous

[94] John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War 2* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999), 148.

variety of *Kasutori Jidai* subject matter, however, is a sense of precarious existence.

This precarity is clearly attributable to the historical circumstances of a city that had been subject to large-scale bombing during the war. Mark Selden writes that police in Tokyo estimated the damage wrought by American raids on Tokyo to be 137,582 killed and wounded, 787,145 homes and buildings destroyed, and 2.6 million people displaced. Much of this damage occurred on one night, May 9-10, 1945. On this evening, the night of the so-called Asakusa Firebombing, strong winds fanned fires started by incendiary bombs and 'propelled firestorms across the city with terrifying speed and intensity.'[95] Selden argues that police estimates are most likely conservative, and that actual figures could be 'several times higher than the figures presented on both sides of the conflict.'[96] The bombing resulted in up to 60 per cent of Tokyo's urban areas being destroyed (actually a moderate figure given that other cities saw up to 88 per cent destruction, and 98 per cent in the case of Toyama).[97]

This damage to Tokyo, of course, meant that simply surviving became increasingly difficult for those residing there, particularly given the lack of reliable accommodation. In this bleak landscape, the central challenge that faced the residents of Tokyo was simply surviving. John Dower writes of the shock experienced by the occupying Americans who arrived in Tokyo only to find that 'everything had been flattened' with the city's residents forced to find refuge in any structure available.[98] Those without shelter crowded the streets, which 'quickly became peopled with demoralised ex-soldiers, war widows, orphans, the homeless and unemployed – most of them preoccupied with simply staving off hunger.'[99] In addition to the chaos and disorder caused by the bombing raids, between October 1, 1945 and December 31, 1946 roughly 5.1 million Japanese

[95] Mark Selden, "A Forgotten Holocaust: U.S. Bombing Strategy, the Destruction of Japanese Cities & the American Way of War from World War 2 to Iraq," *Tha Asia Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 5, no. 5 (2007).
[96] Ibid., 9.
[97] Ibid., 10.
[98] Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War 2*, 47.
[99] Ibid., 48.

soldiers and citizens were repatriated en masse from Asia's battlefields and Japan's former colonies.[100] There was also the need for a large number of non-Japanese to be repatriated from Japan to their country of origin. This group included around 31,000 American POWs, roughly the same number of Chinese POWs, and the 930,000 Koreans who had either migrated to Japan during the imperial era or who had been conscripted for heavy labour with the acceleration of Japan's military expansion.[101]

This backdrop of destruction, displacement, hunger, and destitution lies behind many of the images in Hayashi's *Kasutori Jidai* photographic series. At the same time, however, the images often reveal a sense of hope in spite of the difficulties faced. In the following two images, for example, scenes of destruction also contain details that point to a sense of order amongst the chaos. This sense of order is subtly visible in the below depiction of the repatriation process.

[100] Ibid., 54.
[101] Ibid.

Figure 1: "Repatriates (Ueno Station), 1946" from *Kasutori Jidai* by Hayashi Tadahiko, 2007 [1980].

Providing a vivid impression of the ordeal experienced by the millions of citizens and ex-servicemen forced to return from former Japanese colonies, and particularly from the puppet Manchurian state, the image also subtly conveys the more general horrors of war. The chaotic arrangement of people and their possessions within the frame recalls the rushed nature of the evacuation experience. This chaos, however, is offset by the loose order in which the main figures in the image either sit or lie along the line formed by the straw mat that runs vertically through the middle of the frame. This tattered mat suggests a small token of comfort during what is most likely to be a very long wait. The line of feet at the left of frame also indicates the orderly placement of repatriates by governmental authorities as part of a broader scheme aimed at the efficient movement of people. In fact, both the central line of the mat and the left hand

row of feet hint that, notwithstanding the current chaos, any immediate danger has passed and life for Tokyo's citizens is slowly returning to normal.

On a figurative level, the image might also be read as evoking memories of the battlefield itself. While this effect is evident generally in the chaos of the scene, it is more potently suggested by the figures of the sleeping woman and child, whose sprawled positions are reminiscent of corpses. Hayashi has used a flash to illuminate the scene and this secondary impression is enhanced by the child's dirty and tattered clothing and also by the various bruises and sores that are more acutely contrasted against the adult woman's pale skin by the effect of the flash. Although the use of the flash was likely to have been a matter of technical necessity, its effect creates a battlefield ambience by adding dramatic contrast while also emphasising the rough details of the scene. The bright flash of camera light also evokes what is referred to in Japan as the *pikadon* (flash-boom) of the atomic explosions which the Allies argued were necessary to bring the war to an end. Of course, the camera flash in and of itself does not necessarily connect us directly with the atomic bomb. However, the backdrop of war destruction in the *Kasutori Jidai* images can invoke an association with the initial flash that preceded the full force of the bomb's impact upon Hiroshima and Nagasaki. There is thus a doubling effect of Hayashi's expedient use of flash in this image (and others in the photo series) whereby its powerful light illuminates the physical scars of war but also figuratively suggests other traumas. This points us to how contingencies at the moment of capture at times produce photographic meanings that were perhaps unintended at the time.

Despite these associations with the atomic bombings, and a more generalised sense of the chaos of war, figure 1 nonetheless retains a resonance of hope and a suggestion of human resilience. This resonance is even more evident in the following photograph of a man who has found shelter in Tokyo's bombed-out ruins (figure 2).

Figure 2: "Living in a Collapsed Building (Edogawabashi), 1946" from *Kasutori Jidai* by Hayashi Tadahiko, 2007 [1980].

Rendering the single human figure diminutive by comparison, the collapsed concrete structure that forms the basis for the man's dwelling speaks to the level of destruction wrought during the bombing raids. The huge slabs of the makeshift structure are starkly illuminated by Hayashi's camera flash (reminding us again of the *pikadon*), setting them against the darkening landscape that forms a background for the inescapable evidence of the impact of war. As with the previous image, Hayashi's flash here accentuates the rough, scarred nature of the material being photographed, highlighting, for example, the twisted spikes of metal reinforcement that protrude in various places from the concrete. As in other images in this series, the landscape here imposes itself on the viewer as rough in texture, dirty, and dishevelled. Nonetheless, the order and ingenuity of human industry persists. This is signified in the first instance by the fact that the man appears to be working on some task, perhaps weaving a straw

mat. The production of such an item might be to improve the comfort of his dwelling, or it might be to sell. Regardless of intent, the calm and measured manner in which he carries out the task provides a sense of normality. There is ingenuity, moreover, to the way in which the ruins depicted have been transformed into a dwelling. Not only has the structure's resident attached a door at the entry, panelling has been added to each side, perhaps to provide a sense of security or merely keep out the weather. The triangular formation of the concrete slabs alludes to the A-frame formation which, due to its strong and stable properties, is ubiquitous globally in house construction. This reinforces a sense of home and stable existence among the surrounding chaos, while simultaneously impressing on the viewer the precarious nature of this man's existence. The sense of precarity is conveyed by the fact that while this structural artefact of Japan's defeat might indeed provide shelter, it also threatens to collapse down upon the human figure. The tension between human and landscape signifies the coalescence of disaster, defeat, destitution, and hope that characterised the immediate postwar years.

A similar tension is present in the following scene (figure 3), although here the human element is ascendant.

Figure 3: "Children, one carrying a dog on his back (site of the General Staff Office, Miyake-zaka), 1946" from *Kasutori Jidai* by Hayashi Tadahiko, 2007 [1980].

In contrast to the previous photograph (figure 2), which is illuminated by the stark white of the camera flash, the lighting in this photograph comes from either morning or afternoon sunlight. This quite different form of lighting reduces the coarse textures of the ruined building behind the figures depicted. The low angle of the sun produces pronounced shadows and softens the skin of the human subjects. The softening effect of the light is complemented by Hayashi's selective use of focus, which brings the two boys and their dog into sharp relief against a blurred background. The jumble of weeds in the foreground, like the puppy the boy at left carries on his back, is a small element of nature that combines with the sunshine to create a sense of peace. Captured from a low angle and in reasonably close proximity to emphasise their physical presence, the two boys appear confident and assured despite the hardships they have clearly endured.

This is particularly apparent in their expressions: the boy on the left stands gazing ahead with a look of mild amusement or perhaps even pride at being the subject of the photograph, while the boy on the right regards the photographer with an assured and mildly inquisitive stare. These elements, and the fact that the subjects depicted are children with their lives before them, create a sense of hope for the future.

This sentiment of hope is not unqualified, however, as the shadowy spaces directly behind the boys remind us of the darkness and suffering that continues to haunt the postwar Tokyo landscape. These spaces and the objects within them further suggest the violence of war and its aftermath. This effect is most explicit in the exploded steel drum directly behind the boy on the right, but also in the shadows directly above the boy at left. The latter is to some extent even reminiscent of the similarly looming wreckage above the man's head in figure 2. In this instance, as well as in the previous images, we can see how the ambiguous nature of photographic representation works against the photographer's seeming intention to imbue his images with a straightforward message of hope. Here, this message has been disrupted by the real-world contingencies of the moment of capture. Hope is in particular signified by Hayashi's choice of subject and compositional strategies, yet the scars on the surrounding landscape remind the viewer that the traumas of war are not so easily overcome.

Not all images in *Kasutori Jidai* feature ruined landscapes or the chaos of repatriation as the backdrop to depictions of postwar recovery. The following photograph (figure 4), taken a few years later than figures 1, 2, and 3, depicts life in a boatyard in which clear signs of war are no longer evident.

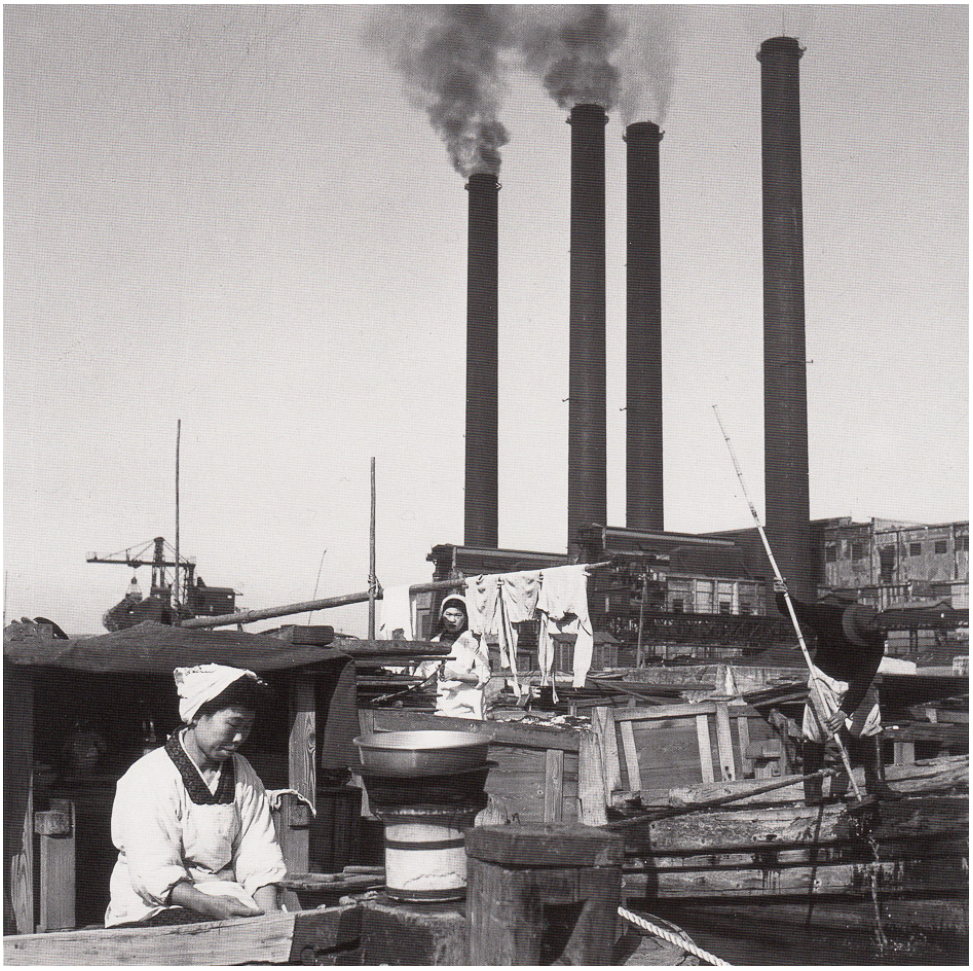

Figure 4: "Cooking on board a boat (Senju), circa 1948" from *Kasutori Jidai* by Hayashi Tadahiko, 2007 [1980].

Rather than suggesting the scars of conflict and challenges to be overcome, this image speaks to the persistence of human industry in those pockets of Tokyo that were untouched by or which had recovered from the war. Despite the relative disarray of the dockyard space, the overwhelming sense in this image is one of order. This is suggested (as in figure 2) both by the calm and measured way in which the three human figures carry out the tasks at hand but also by their spatial relationship within the frame. The eye is drawn initially to the woman cooking in the left-hand foreground, then towards the woman hanging washing at the rear centre, and finally to the man scrubbing his boat at the right of the frame. The eye, in fact, is led in a circular movement around the image from left, to centre, to right, and then back again to the left as the viewer contemplates each figure. This composition, in combination with the individual

pose of each of the figures, evokes a sense of communal industry in a domestic space.

As with the previous two images, however, there is a visual reminder of adversity, even oppression. While in figures 2 and 3 that adversity was evoked by the bombed-out landscape, here it appears in the form of the smokestacks that tower behind the boatyard. These chimneys, along with the factory buildings from which they protrude and the cargo-loading machinery at the frame's left, have a darkness that contrasts with the white clothing of the human figures (including the clothing hung out to dry). Viewers might even interpret the gritty appearance of the smokestacks as evoking the depredations of Japan's fast nineteenth century industrial development or the civilian mobilisation undertaken to accelerate wartime industrial production. A further disruption of any prima facie impression comes from the woman at centre frame, her face half in shadow, who seems to regard the photographer with an expression of disapproval. While this could result from her having to squint into the glare of the low-angled sunlight, it does not diminish the disruptive effect on an otherwise harmonious scene. Here again is a moment in which the subject matter (the woman's glare towards the camera) within the frame disrupts what might otherwise be a relatively straightforward representation of a postwar urban scene.

In the above images, the photographer's apparent intention, suggested by the choice of subject matter and other visual strategies employed to construct the images, was to emphasise a sense of hope and resilience through the motif of stoic human figures persisting against the ruined or, in figure 4, the industrialised Tokyo landscape. In each case, nonetheless, small details captured by the camera point the viewer towards less positive interpretations that undermine any simplistic message of hope. Instead literal and figurative reminders of the war and its aftermath combine with a sense of optimism, indicating the precarious existence that characterised life in Tokyo in the few years after Japan's surrender.

The Gendered Nature of Liberatory Discourses

The images in *Kasutori Jidai* not only contain subtly disruptive elements that remind the viewer of war trauma, but also contain elements that bring attention to the persistence of past and extant gender hierarchies within postwar Japanese society. These hierarchies are embedded within liberatory discourses that emerged in the postwar era, discourses that arose from a general sense of relief at being liberated from the immediate violence of war, in addition to now being freed from the rigid restrictions once imposed by the wartime regime. This sense of liberation was not merely an abstract vision based on theoretical future possibilities, but also a visceral experience, a physical freedom from the controls that the regime had placed upon the labouring and sexual bodies of the subjects of imperial Japan. While many in the immediate postwar period endured severe physical tribulations, which included acute malnutrition, homelessness, or having to resort to sex-work to survive, there remained a sense that individual bodies were largely free from the demands of the imperial Japanese state. Understandably, this newly liberated body became a key motif in popular discourses of the time and was a particular feature of the *Kasutori* pulp magazines in which many of Hayashi's images first appeared.

Dower has argued that Kasutori magazines were one element of the 'cultures of defeat' that emerged in the wake of the war.[102] With their characteristically risqué content, these publications pushed the boundaries not only of prewar moral standards, but also those of the Occupation authorities.[103] Dower observes how, as an antidote to wartime propaganda, the magazines 'denied having any serious purpose whatsoever,' endeavouring instead to provide escapist and largely sexualised fantasies for those afflicted by the *kyodatsu* (exhaustion and despair) that was rife among the individuals of the defeated nation, Japan.[104] Central to the escapist fantasy promoted by these magazines was the body of the woman. Mark McLelland notes how the depiction of woman's bodies in *kasutori* publications was not only more sexualised than during the war, but also

[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid., 148-50.
[104] *Ways of Forgetting, Ways of Remembering: Japan in the Modern World* (New York: The New Press, 2012), 149.

presented in a manner – unthinkable under the wartime regime – that promoted westernised over more traditional representations of female beauty.[105] The following section, then, looks at several of Hayashi's images with a view to interpreting them in the context of the liberatory discourses centring on women's bodies that prevailed at the time. Firstly, however, it is important to explore more general discourses around the body, including the disciplining of male bodies during the war. This exploration is necessary in order to understand how the notion of the body, or *nikutai* – a term that emphasises carnality by combining the words *niku* (flesh) and *tai* (body) – became such an important factor in *kasutori* discourses of liberation.

The postwar favouring of western ideals of physical feminine beauty was part of a larger shift away from wartime ideals of communal sacrifice towards a promotion of the value and the rights of the individual. As Douglas Slaymaker observes: 'The disillusionment and cynicism following the defeat – in many ways an even more desperate time than the war itself, for most Japanese – prompted many to reject the nation's calls for selfless sacrifice and conversely to revel in individual goals and desires.'[106] This was one reason why ideas of freedom in postwar Japan were most strongly symbolised by discourses surrounding the human body. In the field of literature, the expression *nikutai bungaku* (literature of the flesh) was coined to accommodate this tendency. Slaymaker writes that, for many male postwar writers, the body became the most important means through which the individual might negotiate issues of identity at both an individual and national level.[107] This was because defeat had entirely undermined how the individual understood their place in society and even what might in fact constitute Japanese society. In this respect, Yoshikuni Igarashi observes that 'Japan's defeat was a national event: as a nation, it could no longer exist as it had, and its members were forced to reconsider its very foundation.'[108]

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[105] Mark McLelland, *Queer Japan from the Pacific Age* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 60.
[106] Douglas N. Slaymaker, *The Body in Postwar Japanese Fiction*, ed. Mark Selden, Asia's Transformations (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), 22.
[107] Ibid., 10.
[108] Yoshikuni Igarashi, *Bodies of Memory: Narratives of War in Japanese Culture, 1945-1970* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000), 12.

Although the body was central to conceptions of identity in the postwar era, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that this was also the case, although with different emphasis, before 1945. Igarashi observes how in the late 1930s the bodies of citizens were not only a source of labour for the war effort and reproduction to enable population growth, but also 'the medium through which the official ideology for the nation could be realised.'[109] He notes, for instance, how 'ideologues' such as Kakei Katsuhiko (1872-1960) imbued bodily activity such as calisthenics with nationalistic meanings, arguing that the correct enactment of proscribed motions would allow access to an essential Japanese spirit.[110]

For men, the disciplining of the body according to state objectives was most clearly experienced during military training following the introduction of conscription in 1873.[111] While rigorous physical training is of course fundamental to military training, by the late stages of the war physical discipline had become inseparable from ideological discipline. This is potently reflected in the experience of photographer Fukushima Kikujirō (1921-2015) who, although he later became highly critical of the Japanese authorities, as a young soldier was a keen patriot. Despite medical advice that severe jaundice made him unsuitable for military service, Fukushima enlisted and set about supressing his own body ailments in order to serve his country as exhorted by state ideology. Because he was not able to digest military meals he often soiled himself during training drills. He nevertheless continued to train and was regarded therefore as a model soldier. His faith in the military and its ideological discourses was soon destroyed, however, when he witnessed the punishment of other soldiers at the hands of their superiors. These men were brutally beaten for misdemeanours such as failing to recount accurately from memory the *Imperial Rescript to Soldiers and Sailors* or doing so too slowly. Recounting how three of these soldiers tried to escape only to be found dead, Fukushima elaborated:

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[109] Ibid.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Jennifer Robertson, "Blood Talks: Eugenic Modernity and the Creation of New Japanese," *History And Anthropology* 13, no. 3 (2002).

> …one of them was found as a mutilated corpse run over by a train, while the two others were pulled out of the well in the military compound, bloated like rubber balls. The officers and platoon leaders who rushed to the scene kept kicking the bodies until the bellies were ruptured and internal organs burst out, shouting, 'Those traitors,' all the while.[112]

Fukushima's recollections demonstrate the extent to which male bodies became objectified sites for the implementation of state power during wartime.

Another example of the management and manipulation of male bodies is found in the policies surrounding the provision of 'comfort women' during the war. While this may seem a paradoxical claim given the extent to which women were exploited by this horrific system, it is nonetheless true that the comfort women system relied on a mechanistic conception of the male physique. McLelland argues that the institution and continuation of state-sponsored prostitution by the Japanese government, starting in the late Meiji era and ending in 1956, was premised on a 'hydraulic model of male sexuality that saw the male body as a machine that needed proper management so as to maintain proper functioning.'[113] To illustrate this point McLelland cites an official from the Bureau of Hygiene who in 1900 declared that 'the male body needed to satisfy lust to maintain itself, just as a train would come to a halt if it did not burn coal.'[114] Based on this logic, brothels constituted a bulwark that prevented male sexuality from 'bursting out in inappropriate ways' and inflicting itself upon 'the wrong kind of people,' particularly the so-called virtuous daughters from what state ideology deemed to be good families.[115]

Given the extent to which bodies were regulated according to these state ideologies before and during the war, it is unsurprising that, in spite of cynicism towards wartime propaganda and relief at being liberated from militarist

[112] Fukushima, cited in Igarashi, *Bodies of Memory: Narratives of War in Japanese Culture, 1945-1970*, 51.
[113] McLelland, *Queer Japan from the Pacific Age*, 36.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Ibid.

ideologues, the body became a key feature of discourse also in the postwar era. The difference was that discourse after the war was shaped by individuals and the society rather than by the state. And as noted above, this newfound capacity for the people to construct their own representations of the body was perhaps nowhere more apparent than in the *kasutori* magazines in which Hayashi frequently published his work.

One such image (figure 5, below) of the newly liberated body, which is also one of Hayashi's most well-known works, depicts a young dancer, wearing a skimpy two-piece that exposes much of her body, lying on a theatre roof.

Figure 5: "A dancer prone (Rooftop of Nichigeki Theater, Yūrakucho) 1947"
from *Kasutori Jidai* by Hayashi Tadahiko, 2007 [1980].

Described by Dower as 'witty and sad, naturalistic and contrived, erotic and strangely innocent,' the image in that sense captures succinctly the blend of

cynicism and hope that characterised *kasutori* culture. Indeed, this image is laden with the multiple meanings that are idiosyncratic of photographic representation, a multiplicity that, as discussed in the introductory chapter, arises from the interplay between the photographer's input and the camera's capacity to record. A particularly striking aspect of the above image is the way in which Hayashi contrasts the soft, desirable body of the woman against the gritty Tokyo landscape. As in a number of the images discussed above, the human figure here signifies hope. However, where that hope was suggested by the actions of the man weaving in figure 1, for example, here hope derives more from the woman's symbolic value in terms both of her sexuality and reproductive capacity. Much like figure 3, which features the boys in a ruined landscape, the woman, by her very presence and through her pose, signifies the future. Her soft beauty, moreover, stands in contrast to and defiance of the rough landscape. The juxtaposition of body and landscape occurs in manifold ways within the image, particularly through the textural contrast of flesh and concrete. The ledge that supports the woman is sooty, scarred, and rough, which is in strong contrast to the smooth, sensual surface of her skin. This ledge also divides the foreground and background of the photograph and, in combination with the natural altitude of the rooftop, elevates the woman's body as if lifting her in reification above the sordidness and struggle of the quotidian urban space. The symbolic sanctity of this female body is augmented by the soft sunlight of early morning or late afternoon, which exaggerates both the smoothness of her skin and the roughness of the building ledge. The left side (from the viewer's perspective) of the woman's body, in fact, appears to glow in this light. The sunlight also works to amplify the whiteness of her skin against the sooty greys of the city landscape. Each of these contrasts between smooth and rough, high and low, light and dark, works towards an impression of the female body as a beacon of liberation. The sheer incongruity of her relaxed presence in this landscape provides an additional reason for hope.

It is interesting to note, recalling McClelland's comments, that the notion of beauty that the woman embodies is no modest traditional Japanese ideal. The liberal exposure of flesh, her makeup and hair, and her reclining position are all

more redolent of a western fashion shoot and thus appropriate for the 'risqué' space of the *kasutori* magazine. It is not clear whether the photographer has asked this woman to assume her rather artificial Hollywoodesque pose for the camera, or whether the woman, who from the caption we know is a dancer, has simply been captured resting between shows. In reality, the incongruous contrast between the woman's body and the gritty landscape leads the viewer towards the conclusion that this is a staged image, an assumption that is reinforced by the fact that Hayashi was known to construct his images at times. This tendency has resulted in some criticism of his credibility as a documentary photographer.[116] While this uncertainty does not necessarily undermine the symbolic value of the image as discussed above, it does lead to a consideration of the gender dynamics operating at the time of its creation. Was the photographer an opportunist, even a voyeur? To what extent did he orchestrate the scene? Was the young woman subject, who is perhaps still in her teens, a willing or coerced participant?

These questions foreground this photograph's connection to problems associated with the discourses that posited the female body as a site of liberation in the postwar. If we accept that that the photograph is posed, then the position of this woman on the precipice of this building, garbed in western clothing and makeup, her flesh exposed to the camera, can be interpreted as a disciplining of the body towards authorial ends. While reference has been made above to the precarious nature of existence in the wartime and postwar eras, the possibility that the girl's body was deployed as an object to achieve authorial ends gives insight into the insistent precarity experienced by women in postwar times. In this image, the specifics of difficulties faced by women in the postwar era are suggested by the contrast between the fragile, soft, human flesh and the hard, rough texture of the city. Consideration of the gendered power relations that may have governed the production of the image indirectly raises the question of the American presence in postwar Japan and how this presence impacted on

[116] Mitsuhashi Sumiyo, "Tadahiko Hayashi: A Reappraisal in the Light of America 1955," in *Tadahiko Hayashi* (Tokyo: Tokyo Metropolita Culture Foundation, Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, 1993), 7.

postwar gender hierarchies. Here, the westernised presentation of the woman's body might be understood as compliance with a new disciplinary code imposed by the American masters with similar force to the prewar militarist code that it replaced.

Masculine Colonisations

The gendered power dynamics that posited the female body as site of liberation in the postwar era are closely linked to male-centred *nikutai bungaku* (flesh literature) that located freedom and identity in the male body. These discourses were new iterations of late nineteenth century ideas that had persisted through the war years in various forms. In the postwar era, however, there were additional factors to consider such as: the physical hardships of wartime and postwar experienced by both soldiers and citizens; the comparatively permissive state attitude to public expressions of politics, eroticism, and wartime suffering; and the liberated body as antithetical to traditional and military values espoused by the wartime state.[117] These influences readily explain the particulars of the risqué and body-centric content of the *kasutori* magazines. In the case of the 'flesh writers,' however, it is difficult not to interpret the focus on the body that was central to their genre as predominately a reaction against wartime disciplining of male bodies, as discussed above.

The writer perhaps most synonymous with the *nikutai bungaku* genre is Tamura Taijirō, whose work was considered sensationalist despite the author's serious philosophical intentions. Tamura spent a number of years as a member of the Japanese army fighting in China and seemed to have identified with the photographer Fukushima's experiences of ideological bodily disciplining by the military discussed above. Slaymaker notes the prominence of the body not only in Tamura's narratives, but also in the titles of his works including perhaps the two best known, *Nikutai no mon* (Gate of Flesh) and *Nikutai no akuma* (The Devil of the Flesh), concluding that 'for all practical purposes' Tamura 'invented the term *nikutai bungaku*.'[118] Such a strong emphasis on the carnal body – as

[117] Slaymaker, *The Body in Postwar Japanese Fiction*, 1-2.
[118] Ibid., 43.

inherent in the term *nikutai* – represents, according to Dower, a remarkably transgressive act.[119] This is because wartime discourse had centred on the ideology of the *kokutai* (national body), a figurative entity that symbolised Japan as a nation and the essence of which was concentrated in the body of the Emperor. For the average Japanese citizen, in practical terms, the *kokutai* exhorted the individual to supress bodily needs, or in the most extreme case, 'give' the body to the state through death, in sacrifice to the nation. Tamura, on the other hand, argued for the centrality of the individual body as the principal postwar site of meaning:

> …'thought'…is, at this time threatening to push us down; it does nothing else. 'Thought' has, for a long time, been draped with the authoritarian robes of a despotic government, but now the body is rising up in opposition. The distrust of 'thought' is complete. We now believe in nothing but our own bodies. Only the body is real.[120]

Dower notes that the word *nikutai* can, in fact, be read as the antonym of the term *kokutai* – the amorphous body of the nation associated above all (as noted earlier) with the Emperor that remained the centrepiece of many policies and edicts of the wartime era. It is the positing of the individual body, rather than that of the state or the Emperor, as 'reality' that leads Dower to refer to Tamura's project, and most particularly his use of language (i.e. *nikutai* as a play on *kokutai*), as 'sacrilege bordering on lese majesty.' Ultimately, Dower concludes, *nikutai* 'amounted to a complete repudiation of *kokutai,*' and was, therefore, a 'shocking inversion of the body (*tai*) to be worshipped.'[121]

For the postwar flesh writers, the body represented freedom not only from the suffering of war but also from the dire circumstances of the immediate postwar. As intimated above, however, although writers like Tamura emphasise 'the pain of the body, desire of the body, anger of the body, ecstasy of the body, confusion

[119] Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War 2*, 157.
[120] Tamura, cited in Slaymaker, *The Body in Postwar Japanese Fiction*.
[121] Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War 2*, 157.

of the body, sleep of the body' as 'the only truths',[122] it is bodily 'ecstasy' that seemed to be the most important locus for individual freedom. For these heteronormative writers, the female body was the site wherein self-actualisation would be realised through sexual acts. When considered in the context of flesh literature, a central medium of *kasutori* culture, the symbolism in Hayashi's image, *A Dancer Prone* (figure 5) takes on a different cast. Although from one perspective, the image of the woman suggests a kind of transcendent and generalised sense of freedom and hope, it is also ultimately a passive object upon and through which a specifically masculine idea of liberty might be realised. In this sense the postwar focus on the body, and particularly as presented by the 'flesh writers,' was in fact a gendered notion of freedom.

While it clearly represented a reaction against oppressive wartime ideology, the postwar focus on the body can also be read paradoxically as a continuation of prewar state discourses. The western-sexualised representations of female bodies that proliferated in the postwar, and the discursive challenges posed by writers like Tamura to *kokutai* ideology were made possible by the lifting of the strict wartime censorship regime that suppressed such topics. On the other hand, however, the centralised place of the body in discourses surrounding identity was also in a sense a reiteration, albeit transgressive, of the prewar state's focus on the bodies of citizens to realise national goals that had begun in the Meiji era and reached extreme levels in the last years of the war. Furthermore, while in the writings of the postwar 'flesh writers' the body was posited as a site of freedom, this was a gendered freedom in the sense that its realisation came principally through heterosexual sex and thus required an objectified female body. In one sense, therefore, these ideas were a reversed iteration of older state discourses that had privileged heteronormative values and objectified the woman's body through an insistence on monogamy and reproduction. This postwar replication of a gendered binary is clearly suggested in Hayashi's image of the dancer (figure 5) that contrasts the textures of soft, light, femininity with the urban space, which, given the dark, rough texture of the surrounding

[122] Tamura, cited in Igarashi, *Bodies of Memory: Narratives of War in Japanese Culture, 1945-1970*, 56.

concrete and brick surfaces, appears symbolically masculine in contrast.

Not everyone regarded this new postwar freedom as something entirely desirable. Referring to what he regarded as the overly carnal nature of *nikutai* literature, for example, prominent postwar thinker Maruyama Masao (1914-1996) wryly commented that: 'an imagination capable of such exaggeration [i.e. emphasis on sexuality] appears to be soaring away in an unhampered freedom, but actually it's grubbing around on its hands and knees in quite a commonplace world.'[123] Maruyama contended that carnal concerns were so pervasive in postwar literature that the term *nikutai bungaku* was largely unnecessary as a separate category. He worried, in fact, that future historians would, through an analysis of the fictional discourses of the era, erroneously conclude that the entire population was obsessed with sexual matters.[124]

The 'commonplace world' that Maruyama refers to is the landscape of sexual relations that subjugated women according to the sexual needs of males, and which, in the prewar era, converged with a mechanistic understanding of sexuality to produce the excesses of the 'comfort women' system. Although writers such as Tamura may have been uncomfortable with such an association, it was nonetheless largely with sex workers and particularly with *panpans* (the colloquial term for Japanese prostitutes who served Allied servicemen in the postwar, and the subjects of Tamura's *Gate of Flesh*) that notions of postwar freedom were enacted. The association of women sex-workers with a certain freedom was a notable feature of postwar discourse.[125] The *panpan* were somewhat naively seen by some as the vanguard of a new Japanese society that was being shaped by the Americans.[126] Their intimate contacts with the American servicemen put them at the forefront of US-Japan relations, while their frank sexuality seemed a firm repudiation of the austere morality of wartime discourses. Given that they often received gifts from the well-stocked postwar

[123] Masao Maruyama, *Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 250.
[124] Ibid., 247-8.
[125] Holly Sanders, "*Panpan*: Streetwalking in Occupied Japan," *Pacific Historical Review* 81, no. 3 (2012): 405.
[126] Slaymaker, *The Body in Postwar Japanese Fiction*, 41-3.

American PX stores, their associations with the Occupation personnel also seemed to reflect a level of material comfort that was understandably very attractive to a nation dealing with crushing defeat.

Figure 6: "Off-limits in the city (circ. 1950)" from *Kasutori Jidai* by Hayashi Tadahiko, 2007 [1980].

There is no evidence to suggest that the woman in the image above is a *panpan*. In fact, given that the image was taken in 1950 by which time the Occupation had broadened higher education opportunities for women and that she holds a French photography collection, she may be a student. It is not unreasonable, however, to suggest that she to some extent symbolises the positive ideal of assertive postwar women that the *panpan* initially represented. Aside from her obvious attractiveness, her facial expression and upright posture project an

impression of the woman as being savvy and independent. In contrast to the soft and delicate femininity of the dancer in figure 5, the light strikes the woman in a way that suggests the strength of character that comes from life experience or her possibly elevated social status. The boldness of the low angled, strong sunlight that illuminates one side of her face while shading the other enhances the impression of a resolute character. In addition to the book she carries, her stylish attire evidences her successful adaptation to the westernised postwar society. These details reflect the sense of optimism and change that permeates the *Kasutori Jidai* photo series, as well as a particularly positive interpretation of the new sense of individualism espoused by the flesh writers.

Regardless of this particular woman's background, however, there are other details that suggest more broadly the gendered power dynamics unique to the Occupation, and later the base town areas, and which therefore invoke also the darker side of postwar liberatory discourses, including those associated with the *panpan*'s life. Foremost is the criss-cross of barbed wires through which the image has been captured, an unmistakeable reminder of the Occupation, and of the American servicemen with whom many Japanese women traded sexual acts for material currency, whether money or luxury items. A further detail, outside the image itself, is the caption: 'Off-limits in the city.' This caption is likely to be related to Hayashi's location in or near Occupation territory when taking the photograph. It is difficult, however, to know merely by looking at the content of the image exactly who or what is 'off-limits' in a geographical sense. At right of frame a sign seems to designate a sector number and name in English, which would indicate that Hayashi stood outside the exclusive Occupation zone (it makes more sense that such a sign would face outwards than inwards). On the other hand, a Japanese man stands in the background at left; we would generally expect this area to exclude locals and thus assume that the photographer stood outside looking in. There is the possibility, nevertheless, that the man in the background might be an employee of the Occupation.

This speculation over the details of capture might seem to be a mere quibble. Yet, the relative positioning of subject and object has important implications. Were

we to interpret the woman's position as standing inside the exclusory zone, the caption might be understood as denoting the woman's access to a privileged space denied to the majority. This means that she is off-limits to Hayashi himself as a Japanese male; she has become the property of the occupying forces, deepening the humiliation of defeat. Alternatively, the caption merely records the position in which the photographer stood, implying his own access to the exclusory zone. From this position of relative authority, the image might be interpreted as a judgement by the Japanese photographer against the woman, who is now denied to him. Her confident demeanour and westernised mode were also associated with the *panpan* lifestyle, and thus perhaps this woman is judged negatively on the presumption that she aspires to the sexual liberation associated with this. Some might view the harsh lighting as exposing flaws in her life choices, the shadows on her face hint at the 'dark' acts she supposedly performs with servicemen, the barbed wire transposed over her body inflicts fitting punishment for her imagined sins, while the coarseness of her skin elucidates her corrupted status. Either interpretation, or more precisely, *both* interpretations are possible; the vagaries of the photographic moment in this image work against any singular understanding. The ambiguous nature of photographic representation makes any one interpretation elusive in this instance. In this way, the photograph allows a unique window into the complexities of gendered power hierarchies during the Occupation.

Other images in *Kasutori Jidai* intimate these hierarchies in a more clearly defined manner than figure 6 above. The image below (figure 7) was produced three years after the official end of the Occupation. It nevertheless explicitly presents the colonialised power relations that persisted in postwar Tokyo by depicting the American occupation not only of space but also the bodies of Japanese women.

Figure 7: "Occupation sailors sightseeing in Tokyo with Japanese women (Imperial Palace Square) 1954" from *Kasutori Jidai* by Hayashi Tadahiko, 1993.

As a crushing reminder of defeat and the wounding of nationalist and masculine pride, it was difficult for some Japanese men of the era to accept the sight of Japanese women on the arms of American servicemen.[127] As with the previous image, there is no evidence that the women are *panpans*. In fact, given the modest clothing they wear this is unlikely to be the case. Yet, to most viewers of the time, and indeed in this open space, their public consorting with American servicemen may well have evoked the memory of *panpan* activity.[128] While we cannot be certain whether the Japanese man at the right of the frame is in fact looking back at the American sailors – he is perhaps looking to his companion – the symbolism of his glance, speaking as it does of resentment and disapproval, is unmistakeable. Due to the physical size of the two American sailors – they stand a head taller than the Japanese people nearby – and their spatial

[127] For instance, see Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War 2*, 135., and also McLelland, *Queer Japan from the Pacific Age*, 61-2.
[128] Michiko Takeuchi, ""Pan-Pan Girls" Performing and Resisting Neocolonialism(S) in the Pacific Theater: U.S. Military Prostitution in Occupied Japan," in *Over There: Living with the U.S. Military Empire from World War Two to the Present*, ed. Maria Höhn and Seungsook Moon (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010), 80.

positioning at the front of the frame, their bodies dominate the space of the image. The solid black tones of their navy uniforms suggest the might of US military power while also providing a dramatic differentiation between the sailor's bodies and the muted greys of their surround. The space in which they stand is the outer grounds of the Imperial Palace, the geographical and symbolic centre of power in modern Japan before the war ended, looking across at the Meiji Insurance Building that was the SCAP (Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers) headquarters during the Occupation. That these two Americans walk confidently through this space, holding hands with Japanese women, is suggestive of the extent to which the American presence dominated postwar Tokyo even after the Occupation's end. If the glance backward by the man at the right of frame seems to resent the sailor's possession of the Japanese women and the acquiescence of these women to the colonisers. Moreover, the man's glance may also express concern at the victor's encroachment upon the Imperial Palace Square.

Balancing these more overt connotations of dominance in the above image is an impression also of power as domesticated and entrenched in the social landscape. In this sense, the photograph reflects the time at which it was taken: nine years after the Occupation began and three years since its official end (although it is interesting that Hayashi's caption still designates the uniformed Americans as 'Occupation sailors'). Viewed in this way, the image also speaks to the extent to which relations between Americans and Japanese had become familiarised in Japan. Rather than, for instance, an image of two sailors drunk and on the town with their arms around prostitutes, this is a scene of everyday, domestic relations. The women are in a form of dress that is suitable for an afternoon 'family' outing in the sun, while the camera dangling from the serviceman's hand represents not only some disposable income, but also the more mundane act of sightseeing. The familiar and seemingly relaxed way that the sailors and the women are holding hands suggests a long-term relationship rather than a fleeting encounters between just-landed servicemen and sex workers.

This domesticated depiction of 1954 US/Japan relations stands in contrast to the following photograph (figure 8) taken at the same location eight years earlier. In this image, the colonial dimensions of immediate postwar US power in Japan are discomfortingly apparent.

Figure 8: "Occupation officer sightseeing in Tokyo by pedicab (Imperial Palace Plaza) 1946" from *Kasutori Jidai* by Hayashi Tadahiko, 2007 [1980].

The strong impression of uneven power relations is conveyed in the first instance by the very nature of the scene photographed: a victorious Allied officer riding in a rickshaw (a vehicle that evokes the colonial era in Asia) powered by the physical labour of a defeated local. Like the previous image (figure 7), this photograph is taken in the landscape of the Imperial Palace. Yet, given that it was produced just one year after the war's end, the officer's presence in the 'imperial' space is a much more potent signifier of defeat. The officer is sightseeing, an act of leisure powered by the physical labour of the Japanese driver. Also, as opposed to the comfortable body language of the subjects in the previous photograph, here the poses seem awkward – the expression on the officer's face as he regards the camera is one of distrust. He perhaps resents a local recording his image, a role in colonial ideology usually reserved for representatives of the

dominant power. It is also conceivable that the seat upon which he is sitting is too small for a man of his size. Although like most of the images discussed in this chapter the sunlight is at the low angle of early morning or late afternoon, the effect in this image is particularly important. Illuminating both figures from the left of the frame, the sunlight throws the front half of their bodies into shadow, creating an opposition between light and dark. In each instance darkness largely prevails, obscuring the facial features and creating a silhouette of both figures. This hard contrast gives a tension to the image that is more broadly suggestive of the tense atmosphere of the Occupation. This suggestion of colonial power is tempered somewhat by the contrast in facial expressions between the officer's reproachful glance and what appears to be the pedicab driver's willing smile for the camera. The two subjects' contrasting countenances suggest the ambiguous nature of power relations as they manifested in the daily milieu of Tokyo in the immediate postwar years.

Conclusion

These last two photographs are somewhat anomalies within the *Kasutori Jidai* photo series in which Hayashi more often attempts to portray this era as one of hopeful and resilient struggle in the face of adverse circumstances. Rather than a positive message, figures 7 and 8 explicitly remind the viewer of the highly uneven power relations between the American occupiers and the Japanese people in the decade after the war. Hayashi's intention to portray hope is observable in several of the images discussed earlier in this chapter (particularly figures 2–5). In each instance, however, this positive message is tempered by a reminder of the violence of war, and how its attendant traumas continued to haunt not only those who experienced the war, but the Tokyo landscape itself. This urban space, as featured in the *Kasutori Jidai* images, at times bears the explicit scars of wartime traumas while at others more broadly symbolises the adversities of rebuilding, whether as a reminder of the persistent gendered power inequities or of the realities of occupation. In this way the urban space itself, as a contingent reality with which the photographer contends at the moment of capture, works against too simplistic a message of hope in the images. Instead, the interface between material/historical reality and the constructed

nature of the images yields a rich representation of the precarious ambiguity that characterised life for Tokyo residents in the decade after the war.

CHAPTER TWO:

The Individual and the City: the Permutations of Capitalism in Takanashi Yutaka's *Tōkyōjin*

Introduction

Like Hayashi's *Kasutori Jidai,* Takanashi Yutaka's (b. 1935) *Tōkyōjin* (usually translated as 'Tokyoites'), depicts life in Tokyo's public spaces. Takanashi's images, however, were produced at least a decade later in 1965, the year after the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. While evidence of the American occupation is plainly visible in Hayashi's work, we therefore see few overt signs of the ongoing influence of America upon Japan in *Tōkyōjin*. Rather, such influences are subtly embedded within the collection. Takanashi's images also differ in the sense that the economic and physical hardships of the immediate postwar have receded to give way to a society in the midst of economic resurgence. This newfound prosperity, however, does not necessarily bring an unequivocally better life for Tokyo's residents. In fact, in contrast to the sense of hope that that permeates Hayashi's *Kasutori Jidai* images, the atmosphere invoked in *Tōkyōjin* is one of a city of individuals who are weary and alienated despite unprecedented material wealth and supposed freedom from historical hierarchies both economic and traditional. Takanashi's images portray the effect of Japan's new freedom as profoundly disorientating, corrosive to subjective identity, and producing a disconnection from the surrounding space and those who people that space. This sense of alienation is a product of the intertwined forces of post-industrial, consumer-based capitalism and Americanisation that were operating in postwar Japan, the latter an ever-present reminder of both defeat and Japan's role in the Cold War that threatened to overwhelm any local sense of Japanese identity.

Given the strong critique of postwar capitalism that pervades his images, it is interesting to note that Takanashi himself came to forge a successful career in

advertising photography, arguably working at the heart of the consumer-based society so negatively portrayed in *Tōkyōjin.* This career path, however, was not necessarily a conscious choice so much as one of expedience. After graduating from Tokyo Metropolitan Aoyama High School in 1953, Takanashi went on to study photography at Nihon University. Despite his work receiving critical praise in the magazine *Sankei Camera*, after leaving university he struggled to find a news photographer position. Instead, he became a darkroom technician before attending the Kuwasawa Design School and joining the Nippon Design Center. During this time, Takanashi gained some renown and won several awards as a commercial photographer specialising in advertising work.[129]

Despite this commercial success, however, it is his personal work for which Takanashi is best known. The *Tōkyōjin* images first featured as a series of photographs in the January 1966 edition of the photography magazine *Camera Mainichi* and, according to the photographer himself, were the first works in which he 'seriously confronted the city.'[130] Takanashi was especially interested in portraying in these images the relation between 'the subject and the background.'[131] This he did partially through the use of a wide-angle lens which permitted the inclusion of more background within the frame of an image, while also creating a perceptual distance between background and foreground.[132] The images were eventually published as a small monograph that accompanied his first photobook, *Toshi e* (*Towards the City*), published in 1974. With its experimental approach to layout and design, this work is now considered a masterpiece of book design (and is also a highly-priced collector's item).[133]

The cutting edge design of *Toshi e* is fittingly reflective of Takanashi's position within the pantheon of postwar Japanese photographers. Takanashi was a

[129] Author Unknown, "Yutaka Takanashi (Japanese, B. 1935)," in *Toshi e (Towards the City)*, *Books on Books* (New York: Errata Editions, 2010), n.p.g.
[130] Takanashi, cited in Rei Masuda, "Field Notes of Light," in *Yutaka Takanashi: Field Notes of Light*, ed. Shogo Otani Rei Masuda (Tokyo: The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, 2009), 144.
[131] Takanashi, cited in ibid.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Gerry Badger, "Image of the City – Yutaka Takanashi's *Toshi-e*," in *Toshi-e (Towards the City)*, *Books on Books* (New York: Errata Editions, 2010), n.p.g.

founding member of the *Provoke* collective which published several pioneering magazines that featured, alongside his own material, work by revered postwar photographers such as Moriyama Daido and Nakahira Takuma. The mission of the *Provoke* photographers was to challenge the paradigm of realist and indexical representation. This they did by expressing highly personal visions in their work, most notably through the use of high-contrast tones, heavy grain, blurred images and tilted horizons. This latter strategy in particular worked to disrupt prevailing notions of modernist photographic aesthetics that valued symmetry and balanced composition. While Takanashi's *Toshi e* features a similar aesthetic to that of other *Provoke* photographers in its use of contrast, grain, blur, and tilted horizons, the *Tōkyōjin* series more closely resembles a social documentary style. There is, however, a degree of overlap: there are images from *Tōkyōjin* that appear in *Toshi e*, and while the representation is comparatively straightforward, these *Tōkyōjin* images nevertheless project an intensity of mood beyond straight social documentary mode.

This intensity of mood is expressed throughout the photo series as a tension between the rationalising forces that govern public space in capitalist modernity and the subjective experience of the individual who must exist in/negotiate this public space controlled by capital. This is a tension that arguably persists throughout the various permutations of capitalism itself. In order to probe the way in which such tension manifests in Takanashi's images, and also to understand the stark disparity between oppression and liberty that characterised those public spaces, a comparison will be made between early industrial Tokyo and other emergent modern cities such as New York. Attention will then turn to the development of Tokyo as a postmodern city, in which the workings of capital became increasingly obscure. As the analysis of photographic images in this chapter will demonstrate, this obfuscation also worked to conceal the influence America exerted upon Japanese society. This concealment was particularly evident in the way the origins of American-style consumer culture became increasingly forgotten in postwar Japan. Finally, Takanashi's work will be compared with the critique of American society made by the American photographer Robert Frank. This is done to better understand

Takanashi's perspective on American-style consumer culture and to contextualise his work in the broader discourses around the postwar relationship between America and Japan.

Between Object and Subject: Industrialisation and the City

Since the emergence of the modern city, the urban space has been represented ambiguously as a site of oppression and alienation but also as a site that nurtured individual freedom and culture. The coalescence of these paradoxical sentiments reflects the way in which modern urban spaces were increasingly organised, indeed constituted, according to the rationalising logic of capitalism. Max Weber noted that since antiquity the city has been both 'a market settlement'[134] and a heavily politicised space that, to function effectively, relied on the successful integration of commerce, military, and administrative entities.[135] A key feature of the early city was that it was generally under central governmental control. Weber argues that what defines the modern city, on the other hand, is that it became understood as a site of relative freedom from this control. This development occurred because in the early modern era the city was orientated towards commerce in a way that allowed autonomy for the guild and merchant class from the entrenched monarchical and religious authority that had dominated during the Middle Ages.[136] From the industrial revolution onwards, however, the city also became a space of oppression and alienation; this was acutely the experience of the economically marginalised classes in sites such as nineteenth century New York and London. David Harvey notes that with the Industrial Revolution came the intensified production of the city that focussed solely on the maximisation of profits from industry. Rural people who moved there to work in the factories that were now a feature of the city were forcibly incorporated into 'new social structures forged against the background of freely functioning labour markets,' which replaced the 'traditional social

[134] Weber, cited inSimon Parker, *Urban Theory and Urban Experience: Encountering the City* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 10.
[135] Ibid., 12.
[136] Ibid., 12-13.

relations of work [that] were altered or destroyed.'[137]

A similar restructuring of labour – and consequently society itself – was observed in Tokyo, albeit following a different pattern to that which occurred in the West. Paul Waley has argued that, rather than the comparatively isolated sectors found in other American and European examples, modernisation in Tokyo resulted in a more organic geographical makeup and a more integrated mix of 'industrial, residential, and commercial areas.'[138] This is not to say, however, that Tokyo did not experience dire levels of overpopulation and the poverty that accompanied this phenomenon in other places. The early stages of modernisation saw a large influx of new workers to Tokyo's industrial sectors. In inner-city Honjo and Fukagawa Wards, for example, the population tripled between 1885 and 1920 to 437,528, with an average of 43,362 people per square kilometre.[139] This inevitably led to high levels of impoverishment which saw residents increasingly concentrated in 'poverty pockets' comprising wooden shacks and lodging houses.[140] In the later Meiji era and early twentieth century, violent protests against the inequities of industrialisation were not uncommon. In Tokyo, these included the hibiya riot of 1905 and the rice riots of 1918.[141] In spite of putatively lower levels of disruption to urban geography and extant rural kinship systems in comparison to cities like London or New York, major Japanese cities such as Tokyo can therefore be seen as similarly experiencing the kinds of acute social tensions that Harvey argues, as noted above, occurred in late nineteenth century New York.

Photography at times played a significant role in efforts to lessen the threat to social order posed by the rapid social changes that resulted from industrialisation. Harvey points out that the middle class sought to quell social

[137] David Harvey, *The Urbanization of Capital* (Oxford: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 199.
[138] Paul Waley, "Distinctive Patterns of Industrial Urbanisation in Modern Tokyo, C. 1880-1930," *Journal of Historical Geography* 2009, no. 35 (2009): 426.
[139] Ibid., 423.
[140] Ibid., 423-4.
[141] Andrew Gordon, *Labor and Imperial Democracy in Prewar Japan*, ed. Irwin Scheiner, Twentieth-Century Japan: The Emergence of a World Power (Berkely: University of California Press, 1991), 1.

conflicts such as those outlined above through surveillance and intervention aimed at inventing a 'new tradition of community that could counter or absorb the antagonisms of class.'[142] Various groups and individuals became genuinely concerned about both the living conditions and what they saw as degraded moral standards in the areas peopled by the economically marginalised. These concerns led to positive material changes, but also an increased effort to 'civilise' the poor through the inculcation of Christian morality. Photography, with its putative capacity to document, was an ideal medium through which to mobilise such interventions. A notable early example of middle class incursion into the lifeworld of the working class is the collection, *How the Other Half Lives*, by American Jacob Riis (1849-1914), which featured photographs of the public spaces and living quarters of the working class. Published in 1890, Riis' book utilised images and text to raise awareness of the often appalling conditions endured by the economically poor in late nineteenth century New York. The photographs in the book were often lit by flashbulb, creating an uncanny impression and highlighting Riis' depiction of the squalid conditions. Below are two examples from the series (figures 1 and 2).

[142] Harvey, *The Urbanization of Capital*, 199.

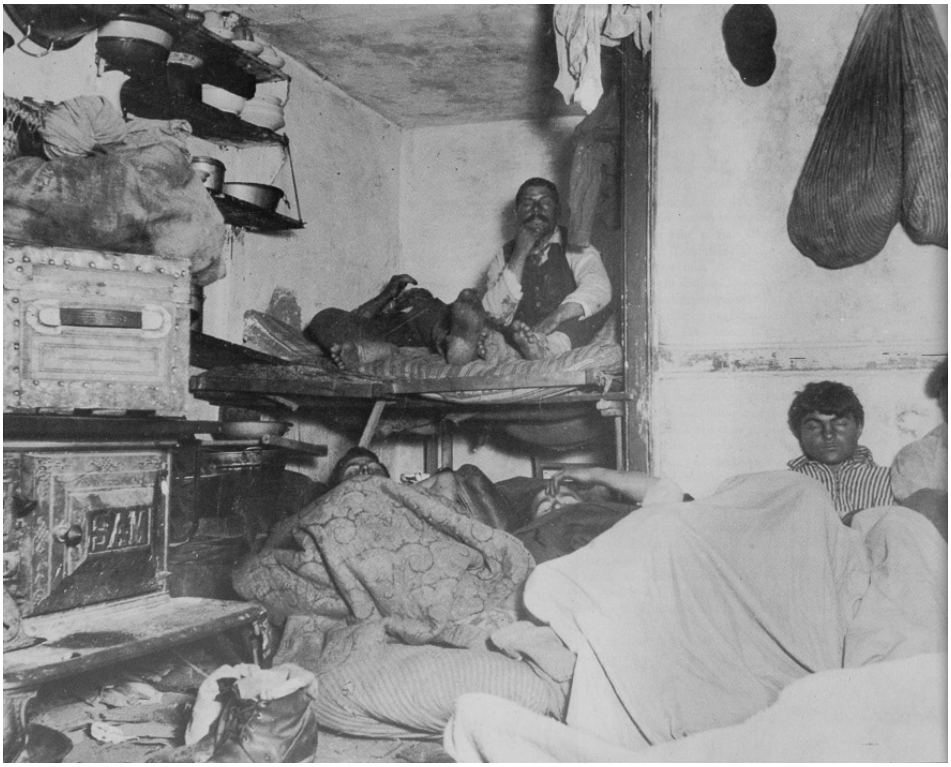

Figure 1: - “Lodgers in a crowded Bayard Street tenement–‘five cents a spot’” from *How the Other Half Lives* by Jacob Riis, 1971 [1890].

Figure 2: - “Twelve-year-old boy (who had sworn he was sixteen) pulling threads in a sweat shop, about 1889” from *How the Other Half Lives* by Jacob Riis, 1971 [1890].

Riis' project stood out against the other types of surveillance and interventions – such as programs targeted at moral and physical hygiene or birth control – in that he did not seek to alter the behaviours of slum inhabitants. Instead, he tried to highlight the injustices these people had to endure in the industrialised urban space of New York at that time. His book was intended as a moral condemnation of the bourgeoisie who directly or indirectly profited from the situation, and attempted more generally to spur altruistic support for slum dwellers. Although Riis undoubtedly had a genuine desire to assist, however, his project was nonetheless very much a middle class intervention into the private and public spaces of the working class lifeworld. While the photographs and their accompanying text did indeed spark interventions that led to improvements in living conditions for many, there was also a sense of 'moral indignation' on the part of the middle class photographer, a response not only to the desperate material conditions depicted but also to what was regarded as the morally corrupted working class who were the subject of Riis' images.[143]

Despite the negative impact of industrialisation on many people, some saw the city as a site of liberation from the repressive structures of tradition and social relations that operated in rural villages and towns. Georg Simmel (1858-1918) articulated this perspective in his 1903 essay "The Metropolis and Mental Life," in which he argues that the hyper-stimulating urban environment and reduction of social relations to rational calculation produced the conditions conducive to individual freedom. Simmel argued that since rural life stifled individual freedom, it created 'barriers against individual independence and differentiation within the individual self' under which 'modern man could not have breathed.'[144] In the past, parochialism was necessary for the self-preservation of small communities whose formation was still tenuous and which often therefore faced real external dangers.[145] Cities, by contrast, were not only less vulnerable to external threats, but an emphasis on commerce allowed urban sites to transcend their 'visible

[143] Charles A. Madison, "Preface to the Dover Edition," in *How the Other Half Lives* (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1971), vi-vii.
[144] Georg Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life," in *Classic Essays on the Culture of Cities*, ed. Richard Sennett (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1969), 54.
[145] Ibid.

expanse.'[146] The city was networked to its exterior via trade connections in a way that small towns with self-contained economies were not. Coupled with the sheer volume of people, cities were thus cosmopolitan sites with heterogeneous, amorphous, and diffuse social structures.[147]

Beyond its spatial characteristics, however, was the modern city's inherent constitution as a space rationalised by the logic of capitalism. Simmel acknowledged that the urban space eroded a sense of meaning and authenticity by reducing everything to rational calculation: 'Money, with all its colorlessness and indifference, becomes the common denominator of all values; irrevocably it hollows out the core of things, their individuality, their specific value, and their incomparability.'[148] Yet, it was precisely this flattening effect, Simmel argued, that provided grounds for individual freedom, because 'the preponderance of what one may call the "objective spirit" [the rationalising forces of mercantilism and government] over the "subjective spirit" [the unique experience of the individual person]' and the constant onslaught of ephemeral stimuli produced a 'blasé attitude' to one's surrounding environment and the people within it.[149] As will be elaborated further below, this 'blasé attitude' is reflected in many of Takanashi's images of postwar Tokyo, and is often indicated by bored or distracted expressions on the faces of his subjects, resigned postures, or else in the visual dissonance between the human subjects and the surrounding urban environment. This latter effect (as noted earlier) is a specific result of the deliberate technical strategies employed by Takanashi when constructing an image.

While the alienating effect of the urban landscape largely features as a negative phenomenon in Takanashi's images, for Simmel this is in fact a liberating aspect because it provides an opportunity for personal autonomy and self-realisation. Since the city dweller had little interest in those around her or him, a social order was created that was relatively free of scrutiny and thus allowed space for individual expression. Additionally, the commerciality of the urban space

[146] Ibid., 56.
[147] Ibid.
[148] Ibid., 52.
[149] Ibid., 58, 51.

encouraged the differentiation of products and/or services between competitors, a dynamic that carried over into social relations.[150] Most importantly, Simmel argued, the threat to subjectivity posed by such an objectifying social space in fact compelled the individual to develop and strengthen his or her individuality. It was only by 'summoning the utmost in uniqueness and particularization' that the modern city dweller would be able 'to preserve his most personal core.'[151]

In Takanashi's case, we can in one sense see the relevance of Simmel's positive assessment of the urban space. The commercial industries that governed the Tokyo urban space provided Takanashi with employment, which in turn gave him the material means – both economic and technical – as well as social proximity to like-minded individuals, necessary for the production of *Tōkyōjin*. It is also interesting to consider the extent to which his commercial work may have enabled the critique Takanashi mounts of Tokyo's postwar spaces in *Tōkyōjin*, and to some extent *Toshi e.* We can understand this seemingly paradoxical position (a position that Takanashi shared with the American photographer Robert Frank, discussed later in this chapter) as more broadly emblematic of the tension between individual subjectivity and the objectifying forces in the urban space as identified by Simmel. Takanashi's position as both functionary within and critic of Japan's postwar consumer capitalism means that there is an irresolvable tension at the heart of the *Tōkyōjin* project between the contingent material circumstances of its creation and its intended message. This tension adds another layer of complexity to the representation of postwar Tokyo that features in *Tōkyōjin* and invokes the ambiguity that underpins the work of each of the photographers discussed in this thesis.

Takanashi's links to commerce, however, do not undermine his credibility as auteur nor do they diminish the quality of his critique. Rather, these links on the part of the photographer point to a divide that modernity requires each individual to traverse in order to reconcile themselves with a society largely governed by the objectifying logic of capital and commerce. It is this tension that is at the heart of *Tōkyōjin*, reflected in the juxtaposition of the human and urban

[150] Ibid., 57-8.
[151] Ibid., 59.

environment. Taken as a whole, the body of images in the series depicts a Tokyo space whose inhabitants are alienated from the surrounding environment, from other individuals, and even from themselves. While Simmel may have seen value in the severing of unnecessary human relations in the city, Takanashi's *Tōkyōjin* images strongly suggest the alienating, isolating consequences of this diminished contact with others. This is clear in the photo below (figure 3).

Figure 3: "Chuo-ku: Ginza West-6, Monkey Dance Festival, August 28" from *Tōkyōjin* by Takanashi Yutaka, 1974.

Principally through the use of selective focus and lighting, this photograph conveys to the viewer a sense of isolation on the part of the young woman profiled in the image. Her face and body are brought into sharp relief, while foreground and background are blurred. This aesthetic effect is the result of an expedient camera adjustment: the photographer has selected a 'wide' aperture setting on his lens in order to allow enough light to enter the lens while reducing the length of exposure time required by this darkened space. The chosen lens setting has produced a shallow depth of field that creates a visual sense of the young woman's disconnection from her surrounding environment. Takanashi could alternatively have used a camera flash, producing the bright and even

lighting that is a feature of a number of Hayashi's images (see chapter one) and of several images by Riis (see figure 1 above). He could also have set his camera on a tripod and exposed the film for a longer period of time. This would have blurred all movement in the shot, rendering details indistinct. Either technique would have produced a very different image and made the photographer more conspicuous both to his subject and those around her. Takanashi's selected method instead allowed him to remain relatively inconspicuous while photographing and thus able, while also creating a perceptual difference between young woman featured and the space around her, to produce a seemingly candid portrayal.

This isolating effect suggests, as Simmel argues, a withdrawal of the individual from the maelstrom of lights, noise, images, and people that characterise the urban environment. Yet, rather than any sense of a person whose individuality is thriving in the urban milieu, the image suggests a dullness of senses, a reduction of agency. This impression is confirmed by the placid expression with which the young woman featured stares into the distance, presumably watching the dance festival of the caption. With her distracted expression she appears to be oblivious to the woman to her left who is apparently about to initiate conversation. This sense of alienation is furthermore attributable to the way the lighting strikes the main subject's body, isolating her as would a spotlight, but in this instance from behind. Her face is thus thrown into shadow, further reducing a sense of her individual persona. The lighting of the image is also marked by an inherent artificiality that casts an unnatural sheen upon the woman, as if to highlight her isolation. The direct focus of the light also produces regions in the image of deep shadow that are largely devoid of detail and which, in combination with the blurred focus, create the sense of disorientation that might be regarded as a feature of Tokyo's postwar space.

The Obfuscation of Capital in Postmodern Spaces

While the alienating effect of the urban landscape that is described by Simmel and which is represented in the above image by Takanashi (figure 3) has been a feature of the modern city since the advent of the earlier industrialising

processes described above, it is to some extent perpetuated in contemporary times. By the 1960s, when Takanashi produced the images for *Tōkyōjin,* a new and profound sense of urban disorientation was beginning to emerge, a disorientation that was in part attributable to the severing of space from historical context. This was a result of fundamental changes that were occurring in the forms of capital production, changes that also altered the production of city space. This process began in the mid twentieth century, by which time the tense nature of social and economic relations in cities eased to a certain extent as the shape of industrial production began to alter and material conditions improved for many urban dwellers. This, Harvey argues, resulted from the shifting nature of capital investment, which became less focussed on the fixed and intensive systems of industrial production and more on cities as centres for consumption. This is not to say, of course, that industrial production ceased altogether. Rather, a shift in emphasis saw the 'post-industrial city' emerge. While still home to many dispossessed peoples, the post-industrial city skilfully disguised the working class exploitation that had been a strong feature of industrialisation.[152] Yet, while exploitation may not have been as apparent as in the past, the dilution of social and labour structures resulted in a tenuous existence for many urban dwellers.[153] These new post-industrial spaces were profoundly disorientating for the individual subject – in Fredric Jameson's words they defied comprehension because 'mutation in the object [was] unaccompanied as yet by any equivalent mutation in the subject.'[154] Urban centres came to convey the incomprehensibility of the 'great global multinational and decentred communicational network in which we find ourselves caught as individual subjects.'[155] The decentred nature of postwar capital investment and its communication networks exacerbated this sense of disorientation in the urban space by also eroding a sense of connection to historical context. This erosion induced a sense of depthlessness to urban public spaces, an aspect of postmodern space that will be elaborated upon in the discussion below.

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[152] Harvey, *The Urbanization of Capital*, 209-10.
[153] Ibid., 210.
[154] Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 38-9.
[155] Ibid., 47.

As the previous image (figure 3) demonstrated, a central aspect of Takanashi's depiction of the city in *Tōkyōjin* is the sense of disorientation and cognitive disconnect to which Jameson refers. Rather than taking the landscape as a subject, however (although this is the emphasis in *Toshi e* and later works), as the title of the collection (literally translated as *Tokyo People*) suggests, in this series Takanashi concentrates on how the space impacts on the individual. In other words, he generally trains his lens upon people and crowds. There are, nonetheless, several exceptions to this focus on people. The emphasis in the image below (figure 4), for example, is on the landscape rather than the people within it.

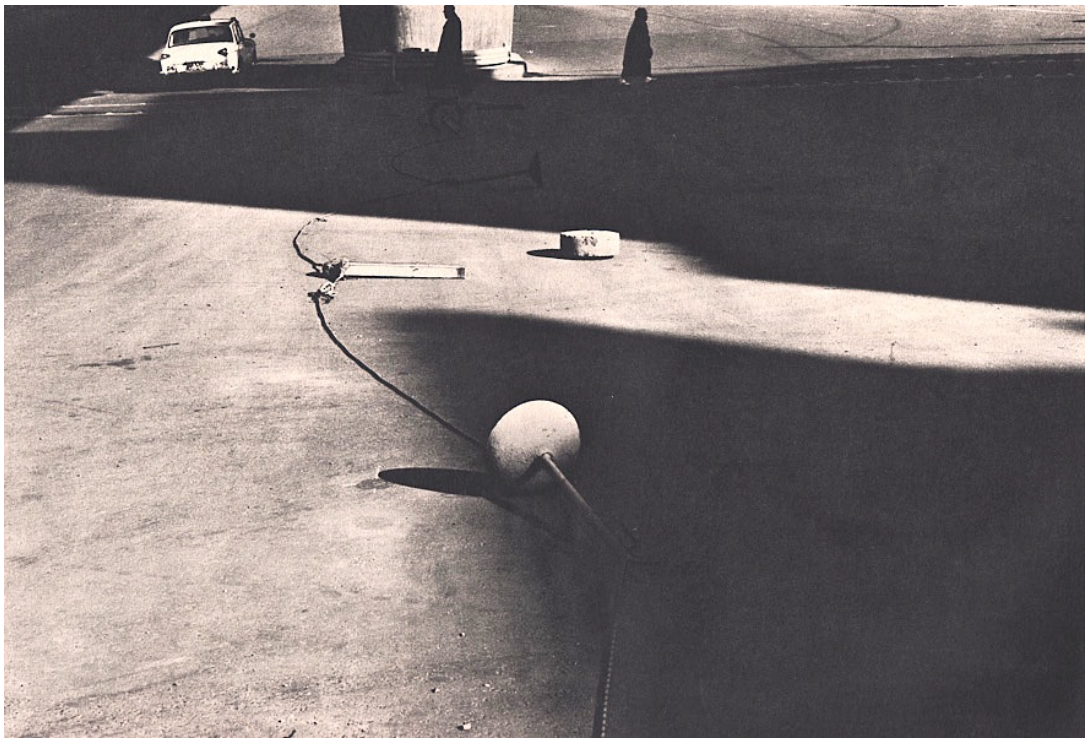

Figure 4: "Shibuya-ku: Miyamasuzaka" from *Tōkyōjin* by Takanashi Yutaka, 1974.

Second in the book's sequence, this image establishes the disparate nature of space in a postwar Tokyo society that, having moved on from the narrative of recovery from the destruction of war, now seemed to have no moorings. The most striking visual aspect is the melancholy pall of shadows that punctuate the landscape, creating entirely separate spaces to those lit by sunlight. The human figures are reduced to outlines of this darkness; mired in the gloom, their estrangement from each other signified by their oppositional posture. The car at

top left stands out as a putative beacon of hope in the postwar, an idealised object of consumption and personal freedom, representing the new – Americanised – society developing in Japan at that time. The strewn and disparate components of a collapsed barricade allegorise the underlying discord of an apparently highly organised postwar Tokyo society. The rough texture of the sunlit surfaces remind us of Hayashi's war-damaged spaces (see chapter one), and are similarly the result of morning/late afternoon sunlight. The paper upon which the image has been printed in the book further enhances this gritty appearance. Each page of the book has a coarse texture and is beige in colour, the latter adding a dull pallor to the images. In the case of the image above, the page's dull undertone makes the street space seem dirty. The impression in this scene is of quiet passivity, a space in which objects, humans, and machine exist with little apparent connection to each other, a disparate constellation governed by an indiscernible but highly disruptive order.

The discombobulation depicted in the above scene (figure 4) is arguably the defining feature of postmodern urban space. Writing in the early 1980s, Jameson argued that certain areas of Tokyo had realised 'the model and the emblem, the secret inner structure and the concept, of the postmodern "city".'[156] Although the photographs in Takanashi's *Tōkyōjin* were captured much earlier (in the 1960s), the book in which they appeared was not published until about a decade later, at a time in which, as Yoshimi Shunya points out, postmodernism was particularly visible in the Shibuya region of Tokyo.[157] An important example was the Parco commercial complex, a space structured according to two central 'spatial strategies': segmentation and staging areas.[158] Segmentation was achieved by creating an array of discrete spaces specifically tailored to target a given subset of consumer tastes.[159] The goal was to produce urban spaces that were 'personalised' to the visiting customer; in order to achieve this effect, Parco designer Tsutsumi Seiji insisted that all local 'parochialist sentiment had to be

[156] Ibid., 98.
[157] Shunya Yoshimi, "The Market of Ruins, or the Destruction of a Cultural City," *Japan Forum* 23, no. 2 (2011).
[158] Ibid., 290.
[159] Ibid.

eradicated.'[160] The Parco shopping areas had to be divorced from localised cultural context (and in that sense universalised) and at the same time distinctly segmented according to particular themes or preference. Each was thematically self-contained, so that Parco constituted a 'linked series of compartmentalized, multilayered, themed spaces' that were 'unlike the department store of the past where it was possible to look down across the whole shop floor.'[161] Yoshimi notes that this severing of the Shibuya space from its cultural context, and its compartmentalisation, allowed the company to completely control 'the production of the atmosphere.'[162]

The second strategy Parco employed was the '"staging" of urban space' in that the building was not only organised as a 'series of products acting as signifying code for a specific taste,' but also constituted as a 'stage where visitors could act out their roles according to these codes.'[163] The spaces were thus intended to be areas where goods were displayed and sold, but also as performative areas which enabled the enactment of certain lifestyles that were deeply structured by consumption patterns devised by the company. Spaces such as the Parco complex are clearly what Jameson had in mind in his observation of Tokyo's postmodern spatial production. The 'depthlessness' he designated as one of the key aspects of postmodern, or late capitalist, culture, created a lack of tangible historical context.[164] Instead, the surface is the reality, reality becomes a simulacrum: 'the identical copy for which no original has ever existed.'[165] Severed from localised socio-historical context, the Parco complex became a non-specific representation, a self-contained constellation of signifiers with no referent. Yoshimi describes the space as a 'giant theatre,' for the performance of an idealised lifestyle, making it a commodity to be 'consumed in the same way as women's magazines.'[166] It was the removal of context or any sort of clear structure in the postmodern urban environment that made cognitive mapping by

[160] Tsutsumi, cited in Yoshimi, ibid.
[161] Ibid.
[162] Ibid., 289.
[163] Ibid.
[164] Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, 6-9.
[165] Ibid., 18.
[166] Yoshimi, "The Market of Ruins, or the Destruction of a Cultural City," 290.

the individual subject impossible. As Jameson observes, the postmodern space induces passivity, because choice is removed from the act of moving through the space.[167] While the segmented nature of the postmodern space makes it difficult to represent photographically in terms of the issues discussed by either Jameson or Yoshimi, the above street scene (figure 4) to some extent captures the sense of disorientation that these spaces invoke.

The following image (figure 5) of a retail space emphasises both the discombobulated nature and passivity that Jameson and Yoshimi attribute to the postmodern.

Figure 5: "Shinjuku-ku: Keio department store, January 15" from *Tōkyōjin* by Takanashi Yutaka, 1974.

Both effects result from the way in which the shop mannequins – who seem uncannily human – dominate the frame. Captured from a low angle, these figures tower above both the photographer and the two human heads at centre of the image. Modelling western style women's clothing, although not necessarily the luxurious attire found in the Parco space, the mannequins represent consumer

[167] Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, 40-3.

values. It is also interesting to note that – in keeping with the postmodern tendency for segmentation – the bodies of the figures are dissected. The only complete figure that the viewer is able to discern is that of the centre mannequin. Tellingly, the least obvious presence is the human figures, whose heads are just barely visible – the simulacrum here supplants the real. The placement of the mannequins in such an imposing yet fragmented manner in the image foreground disrupts the perception of spatial depth within the frame, an effect that is accentuated by the blinding cross of fluorescent lighting which horizontally divides that frame. This lighting seems to bisect the central mannequin while at the same time symbolically reifying the figure. It is as if the rays of light emanate from the figure's midriff, making the dummy seem almost sacred. The elevated dais upon which the mannequins have been placed, a structure that possibly has space beneath for the display of other consumer items, further divides the image. Taken in combination, each of these elements creates within the viewer an overwhelming sense of the disorientating nature of postmodern Tokyo's commercialised spaces.

The Internalisation of America in Japan's Postwar Modernity

For many in the postwar era, the shifting nature of capital in urban centres was inseparable from the Americanisation of Japanese society. This was particularly true for Tōmatsu, whose work is the subject of chapters six and seven. Takanashi's *Tōkyōjin* does not necessarily overtly depict the growing influence of America upon Japan – a direct consequence of defeat and occupation. Rather, a sense of defeated resignation in the face of the objectifying intrusion of consumer culture, which is closely intertwined with the needs of capital, permeates each image in the collection. Although this disaffection was discernable to some extent in figure 3 above, which depicted the young woman staring to the right of frame, it is even more palpable in the countenance and posture of the central male figure in the image below (figure 6).

Figure 6: "Chiyoda-ku: Hibiya Park, April 26. Prep rally of the anti-Vietnam war" from *Tōkyōjin* by Takanashi Yutaka, 1974.

In spite of the fact that the image depicts a rally against US military involvement in Vietnam, an event that should be unifying (and possibly even hope-inducing) for Japanese participants, the central figure of the image appears lonely and despondent. This despondency is rendered even more acute in contrast to the row of gleaming automobiles, supposed facilitators of personal autonomy and here most certainly signifiers of wealth. Possibly Japanese-made, the vehicles convey a sense of the success of the country's successful high-speed economic growth. The young man's countenance, however, suggests that the 'success' is not universal. In fact, his downcast demeanour, shared to some extent by the figure in the left foreground, seems to make a mockery of any positive symbolic value that might be attributed to the cars. This sense of mockery is perhaps enhanced by the automobiles' slightly ironic presence as Americanised objects of consumer desire at a rally against American government activities.

The presence of the cars in the above image (figure 6) also reminds us of how the global nature of late capitalism that shaped public spaces in Tokyo often inferred an American influence. This was evident not only in a new way of shaping the

landscape according to market logic, as in the Parco space, but also by the intensified manner in which the iconography of capitalism adorned Tokyo's public spaces. Although taken from *Toshi e*, rather than *Tōkyōjin*, the following image is an example of how Takanashi represents the encroachment of this iconography upon the individual (figure 7).

Figure 7: "Untitled" from *Toshi e* by Takanashi Yutaka, 1974.

The dehumanising manner in which consumer culture colonises public space is most strikingly represented in the apposition of human figure and cardboard replica, a juxtaposition in which the cardboard simulacrum appears more lifelike than the living man. This impression is created as a result of the commercial image having presumably been captured under ideal studio lighting, lending the pictured woman's skin and clothing more tonal detail, whereas the naturally lit features of the man lack comparative definition. While the outdoor lighting produces an obfuscating contrast that results in the relatively indistinct outline of the man, this effect has been exacerbated by the overall contrast applied to the image during processing. This juxtaposition, which privileges the simulation, suggests how images take on a hyperreality in the post-industrial urban space, and points to the postmodern confusion around reality. The power of the image

is further strengthened by the manner in which the large television, a machine dedicated to the transmission of consumer culture, fills the foreground. Television, Jameson argues, 'articulates nothing but rather implodes, carrying its flattened image surface within itself.'[168] Adding to the confusion produced by the arrangement of human figure and the other objects within the image is the lack of perspectival depth. This is a result both of the particular way in which the image has been composed and also the level of contrast given to the image by the photographer. Seeming to be more a collage of disparate elements than collection of items arranged according to any traditional linear perspective, the image suggests the manner in which the individual self is forcibly collapsed into the mechanics of consumer culture in late capitalism. Here we see depicted the objectifying logic of commerce that fundamentally challenges subjective selfhood as expressed in the postwar, post-industrial urban spaces of Tokyo. In this way, the image reminds us of Simmel's formulation of urban space in the earlier stages of capitalist modernity. Rather than simply a deluge of visual stimuli upon the individual, however, here the principal challenge to the 'subjective spirit' (to use Simmel's term) seems to be the ambiguity around what is simulation and what is simulated. This confusion around reality is a new and defining aspect of the postwar, postmodern urban space, a new permutation of alienation that is powerfully captured in Takanashi's *Tōkyōjin* images.

The television in the above image has multiple significance in that, not only is it a device that simulates material reality and is thus a functionary in the postmodern flattening of culture, but is also a physical conduit for the dissemination of that culture. This culture was patterned by commerce and largely emanated from the US, and thus, the television also became integral to the Americanisation of postwar Japan. In fact, the device symbolises not only the creep of American culture into public spaces but into the home itself. As a home appliance, the television symbolised a specifically American modernity centred on consumer fetishism. Yoshimi sees this last aspect as specific to the postwar period in which, due in no small part to the influence of the Occupation, a particularly American mode of domestic living became an aspiration for many

[168] Ibid., 37.

Japanese. This is not to say that household appliances were not available or an object of consumer desire in the prewar era. At that time, however, the central driver for home electrification and domestic appliances was the rationalisation of home labour.[169] In the postwar, and particularly by the mid-1960s, the shift from utility-based to fetish-based motivation was reflected in the designation of a new set of 'three sacred treasures' (a car, an air-conditioner, and a colour television) as the apex of desired household items.[170] These three items 'superseded the earlier holy trinity of desirable consumer goods' of the 1950s: the more utility-based triumvirate of radio, electric iron, and electric stove.[171]

Yoshimi equates this increased preoccupation with consumer goods in Japanese society with what he characterises as a creeping Americanisation into Japanese daily life. The rise of consumer fetishism reflects one of two 'Americas' experienced concurrently in Japan: 'America' as 'desire' and as 'violence.'[172] The America of 'violence' was most strongly associated with the Occupation, wherein the daily presence of military personnel in Tokyo was a persistent reminder of violence inflicted by America during the last stages of the war. At the same time, however, the constant physical presence of America was a source of desire as a result of impoverished Japanese in the postwar observing the conspicuous affluence of the occupiers. The concurrence of these two 'Americas' in Tokyo was reflected particularly in spatial terms. Yoshimi notes that as the physical manifestation of military power, the bases signified violence, but that they were also vectors for the spread of American culture into Tokyo's urban spaces.[173] In Tokyo, this was clear in the proliferation of Jazz venues that initially appeared in Ginza, and especially – more pertinent to this discussion – observable in the current-day status of the Ginza, Roppongi, and Harajuku areas. Each became synonymous with conspicuous affluence and consumption. It was no accident that each area was previously the location for Occupation-related facilities: 'the

[169] Shunya Yoshimi, "'Made in Japan': The Cultural Politics of 'Home Electrification' in Postwar Japan," *Media, Culture & Society* 21, no. 2 (1999): 154.
[170] Ibid.
[171] Ibid., 154-55.
[172] Shunya Yoshimi, "'America' as Desire and Violence: Americanization in Postwar Japan and Asia During the Cold War," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 4, no. 3 (2003): 441.
[173] Ibid., 439.

main buildings' requisitioned by the Americans as administrative facilities were located in the Ginza; a variety of military facilities in the area transformed Roppongi into a 'soldiers town;' while the Washington Heights complex which provided accommodation for the families of Occupation officers was located in Harajuku.[174] Washington Heights accommodation was equipped with the latest in domestic design and technology from America, and thus 'became a symbol of "American affluence".'[175]

The connection between the American military bases and popular culture in Japan, however, was not reducible to a 'simple relation of influence,'[176] according to which an active America imposed itself upon an inert Japan. In fact, resistance and antipathy towards the American presence in Japan affected the dynamic between local and foreign. This was apparent in the often fierce political opposition expressed against the ANPO Treaty (Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan) which guaranteed a continuation of America's strong influence upon Japan's internal matters. Yoshimi notes how, concurrent with the actual American military presence receding in the late 1950s from the Japanese mainland, 'Japanese popular culture attempted to forget its links with the occupier.'[177] It is at this point that the 'two Americas' emerged in Japan, divided geographically, whereby the 'violent' America continued to exist in Okinawa and Yokosuka with its large military bases. The America of 'desire' remained on the mainland in the guise of consumer culture, and as Japan's economic growth continued the overt connection with America in Roppongi, Harajuku, and Ginza receded. The result, according to Yoshimi, was that Americanisation became more insidious, because consumer culture no longer seemed a foreign import but intrinsic to national culture: 'there was a shift from an Americanism modelled directly on America, to an Americanism more deeply embedded in a particularistic national consciousness and more focused on the images of consumer lifestyles.'[178] Rather than being exemplified by the occupiers, this became internalised by Japanese

[174] Ibid., 439-40.
[175] Ibid., 440.
[176] Ibid., 439.
[177] Ibid.
[178] Ibid., 443-4.

people themselves so that, 'conversely,' the impact 'became more interiorized and its effect on people's consciousness and identity became deeper.[179]

It is not difficult to draw connections between this idea of an internalised Americanised consumer culture in the mid-1960s and the Tokyo space presented in the photograph discussed above that juxtaposes man, television, and cardboard cut-out (figure 5). In that image, consumer culture defines the urban space in a manner that not only threatens the featured individual's subjectivity, but the collective identity of the city itself. What Takanashi critiques in this image and others like it is a Japanese society that resonates with unacknowledged echoes of Occupation.

Takanashi's critique is not, however, a vitriolic condemnation of a foreign invader or a corrupted and/or submissive population. Rather, his photographs speak to the tension between individual subjectivity and the objectifying urban space. These objectifying forces, as Yoshimi explains, are inseparable from America and thus impact both collective or national identity and the identity of the individual subject. The following photograph (figure 8) suggests this tension in terms of the dilemma confronting the individual on the escalator.

[179] Ibid., 444.

Figure 8: "Shinjuku-ku: Shinjuku Station Building, March 21. Tokyo-New York, Exhibition. Sister Schools Art Exhibition" from *Tōkyōjin* by Takanashi Yutaka, 1974.

This dilemma is apparent in the iconography that greets the person ascending the escalator. The machine that propels the man forward suggests the nexus of industrial modernity and market capitalism. A cardboard cut-out of a woman greets the man and gestures towards the two national flags which, judging by Takanashi's caption, are intended to promote unity between the United States and Japan. Here, however, they have the contrary effect of suggesting irreconcilable forces that are coalescent in Japanese society. The hand of the simulated hostess figure welcomes, yet her positioning in terms of image composition between the man and the flags simultaneously subverts any sense of greeting, requiring the approaching figure to choose between flags. The apparent freedom in this choice is undermined by the fact that the 'hostess' has her back to the Japanese flag and is gesturing towards the American one – a gesture that appears almost coercive. Although the man has been rendered largely anonymous by Takanashi's camera position, we can nonetheless discern that he is probably old enough to have a clear memory of the war. In this respect, and with the darkness of his clothing, he contrasts strongly against the hyper-modern reflective surfaces of the escalator, floor, and balustrades. Although able

to recall the time before defeat when America was the enemy and Japanese modernity in the ascendant, he is now inescapably conveyed by the escalator and the new currents of the postwar towards a decision that, given the all-encompassing reach of consumer capitalism, individual Japanese largely lacked the power to make.

In a Wider Context: *Tōkyōjin* and Robert Frank's *The Americans*

The chapter thus far has sought to identify a number of differences between early forms of capitalism and the capitalism of the postmodern/post-industrial society that emerged after the war. Neatly delineating these two modes of economic and social organisation, however, is not an easy task, and it is, in fact, more useful to understand them as overlapping. In Mandel's words 'the era of late capitalism is not a new epoch of capitalist development,' but 'merely a further development of the imperialist, monopoly capitalist epoch' that took shape in the nineteenth century.[180] An understanding of this overlap allows us to consider Takanashi's depiction of postwar Tokyo as not merely operating in terms of the particulars of that time and place, but as part of a broader global photographic movement that critiqued a particular form of American modernity. In this sense, it is instructive to consider Takanashi's work in conjunction with that of the Swiss-American photographer Robert Frank, whose highly influential photobook, *The Americans*, was first published as *Les Américains* in France in 1958, and then in 1959 as *The Americans* in the United States.

While the collections produced by Takanashi and Frank vary somewhat in subject matter and were produced in different countries around two decades apart, both critique similar aspects of American culture at a similar moment of economic and cultural development in their respective societies, albeit from significantly different vantage points. *The Americans* was the culmination of a year spent by Frank travelling around the United States and photographing representative scenes of American life. The project was funded by a grant from MoMA (New York's Museum of Modern Arts), with the funding process overseen by, among others, Edward Steichen, MoMA's director of photography and creator

[180] Ernest Mandel, *Late Capitalism*, trans. Joris De Bres (London: Verso, 1978), 9, 118.

of *The Family of Man* exhibition (discussed in more detail in chapter four). Steichen also wrote a letter of support for Frank's grant, and had until that point been something of a mentor – five of Frank's photographs were included in *The Family of Man*. In contrast to the upbeat nature of Steichen's exhibition, which has been described as 'an all-encompassing metaphor for universal harmony,'[181] Frank's depiction of America's postwar economic boom reveals, much like Takanashi's depiction of 1960s Japan, a national space that is culturally stagnant and alienating. Unlike Takanashi, however, *The Americans* does not concentrate solely on the urban centre, but instead encompasses a variety of locations and subject matter. The collection incorporates a critique of America's racial dynamics as part of its representation of postwar American modernity.

Despite an emphasis on urban culture, Takanashi's images in both *Toshi e* and *Tōkyōjin* can be considered similarly not just a critique of city life, but of Japanese society more broadly. This is particularly true of *Toshi e*, which depicts the outskirts of Tokyo as an industrialised and commercialised landscape empty of people or culture, conveying the idea that, since everywhere in Japan has become a city, it is no longer possible to find 'authentic' rural spaces. We have seen that in *Tōkyōjin* the loss of a potentially meaningful existence is often expressed by means of the iconography of commerce that had crept into Tokyo's public spaces. A central conceit of this iconography is the promise of a supposedly heightened experience of life which transcends the comparative mundaneness of the quotidian existence (this was reflected particularly in figure 5 depicting the shop mannequins). In its very hyperreality, however, such iconography threatens to overwhelm the individual as he or she moves about their daily existence in the Tokyo urban space. This sense is strongly conveyed in the following image (figure 9).

[181] Lili Corbus Bezner, *Photography and Politics in America: From the New Deal into the Cold War* (Baltimore & London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 121.

Figure 9: “Shinjuku-ku: Tsunohazu-1, Buffet Totoya” from *Tōkyōjin* by Takanashi Yutaka, 1974.

Captured is a seemingly private moment during a normal workday. While it is difficult to know whether the bright rectangle of light above the man’s head is natural or artificial, it nonetheless gives the impression of daylight in comparison to the darkness of the diner’s interior. A sense of human industry is lent to the scene by the cooking implements and crockery located in the foreground. This hint of human activity, however, contrasts with the wall of images that dominates the top half of the frame. Just as the source of the lighting that streams through the window is unclear, it is also difficult for the viewer to confirm whether or not the images on the wall are advertising materials or an artistic photo installation. Ambiguity, however, does not diminish the impact of this fragmented imagery that dominates the space behind the counter. That we cannot discern art from commerce is, in fact, a telling reminder of the confusing nature of the postmodern space. The images feature a western-looking woman – or at least one who has been styled in western fashion – whose face and body are depicted in segments but never as a whole. The various images comprise a wall of free-floating segments of the woman’s commodified body. In front of this backdrop, the male subject hunches forward over his meal with a tired

expression, gazing towards some event or object external to the image frame. He seems resigned to a culture that has become increasingly flattened by the signs and imagery of commerce and also to a dissipation of selfhood that is symbolised here by the way his body, like that of the woman, is segmented and thus appears to become part of the collage behind him.

This depiction in photographic images of a society and culture which, in spite of unprecedented economic prosperity, has become stagnant and rank closely links Takanashi's *Toshi e* and *Tōkyōjin* to Frank's *The Americans.* One reason for this connection is the similar economic trajectories of each nation at the time of image production. Frank took his photographs in 1955 during America's postwar economic boom, while Takanashi's *Tōkyōjin* material was taken during the early 1960s lead up to the Tokyo Olympics when Japan's economic resurgence was becoming apparent both domestically and internationally. Another point of convergence is that both men, while critiquing the encroachment of late capitalist culture, were at the same time successful commercial photographers specialising in advertising. In other words, they were key functionaries in the very system that they critiqued. Their commercial work, however, was a function of financial necessity and does not mean we should question either the sincerity or the potency of their respective projects. On the contrary, these employment experiences strengthen their works by providing an inside perspective.

The similarity between Takanashi and Frank's work is particularly apparent when comparing the following image by Frank (figure 10) to Takanashi's diner image (figure 9) featured above.

Figure 10: "Ranch Market – Hollywood" from *The Americans* by Robert Frank, 2012 [1958].

Like that of the man in figure 6, the expression of the woman featured in Frank's image is somewhat ambiguous, suggesting a mixture of weariness, boredom, and perhaps even cynicism. Similarly, her body is excluded from the image so that just her head is balanced against the imagery and paraphernalia of the food service industry. Here the effect is equally disorienting, but also vaguely sinister due to the slightly demonic image of Santa Claus and the cold, bright metallic surfaces that house the advertising placards and food products. All is modern and commercial within the image, emphasising the disorientation and alienation – we might even say dispossession – that seems to afflict the woman. The result is a strong impression of a disempowered individual at sea in the maelstrom of a heavily commercialised postwar culture. In this way the image reflects Frank's mission, which, as stated in his Guggenheim application, was to document a 'kind of civilization born here and spreading elsewhere.'[182] As Sarah Greenough and Philip Brookman note, for Frank this meant 'scrutinizing [American] culture with an honest but passionate vision to reveal a profound sense of alienation, angst,

[182] Frank, cited in Peter C. Mazario, "Introduction," in *Robert Frank: New York to Nova Scotia*, ed. Anne Wilkes Tucker (Houston: The Museum of Fine Arts, 1986), n.p.g.

and loneliness,' an interpretation that contrasted against America's 'wholesome and unambiguous image of itself.'[183]

Frank's project extends beyond a singular critique of American society to also encompass issues of race and the failures of the country's political system. The following manages to combine these two elements within the same image (figure 11).

Figure 11: "Drug Store – Detroit" from *The Americans* by Robert Frank, 2012 [1958].

[183] Sarah Greenough and Philip Brookman, "Moving Out: An Introduction," in *Robert Frank: Moving Out*, ed. Martin Gasser W.S Di Piero, John Hanhardt (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1994), 24.

In this, yet another diner scene, the invasive nature of consumer culture is reflected by the bewildering array of advertising signs floating above the patrons. These signs pack the space above the crowd of customers and the few employees who serve them, creating a claustrophobic atmosphere that erases the possibility of private thought or reflection. The blurred objects, a cake, and what might be Frank's hand, clutter the foreground and further add to the cramped feeling. In combination with the intensely rationalised organisation of the diner – lining customers along the counter for efficient delivery of service, dispensary devices strategically dispersed – the crowdedness reflects the extent to which capital organises social life. We can also see how American society continued to be demarcated by race: the line of the counter separating African-American server from the mostly white customers reminds us of the history of slavery and the perpetuation of its labour divisions, not to mention the special delineations that excluded African-Americans from public spaces in America's south. Added to this impression is the position of what look to be two African American sailors occupying the counter at the very rear of the diner, reminding us of the separated eating spaces of the segregated South. The aspect of race is one way that Frank's portrayal of postwar modernity differs to that of Takanashi, another difference is the modes of capitalism that are depicted. When comparing Takanashi's image of the diner (figure 9) to the above image by Frank (figure 11) we can see that in Takanashi's image the rationalising logic of capital is obscured, particularly to the customer, whereas in Frank's the governing of space is more clearly observable. Such a difference points to the changes occurring in the formation of capital in the decade or so between the period in which the images were produced, to the shift from the earlier, universalising modernity to the more fractured and segmented postmodernity.

While the similarities between Takanashi and Frank's portrayal of America's postwar culture are clear, it is important to note some fundamental differences between the two photographers. These differences are best understood in terms of the respective positions from which each worked: Takanashi's position as a Japanese person means that his critique emanates from within Japanese society and is directed toward American culture as an external force. In this narrow way

we might conceive his to be a nativist approach. Frank's position, on the other hand, was somewhat more ambiguous due to his outsider status as a recent emigrant and his self-styled reputation as an iconoclastic challenger of the universalising modernism prevalent in America during the 1950s. This attitude was reflected in what eventually became his explicit rejection of the universalising approach to photographic representation championed by Steichen, his former mentor.[184] As Lili Corbus Bezner notes, however, Frank's roguish persona works to conceal the fact that he was embedded not only within the advertising industry, but also within the privileged highest echelons of high art photography. Frank's association with Steichen, his participation in *The Family of Man*, and his association with yet another towering figure of American photography, Walker Evans, evidences this.[185] Indeed Evans provided a letter of recommendation for Frank's application to the Museum of Modern Art for the funding required to produce *The Americans*. What this points to is Frank's underlying ideological perspective that ultimately affirms American values. Echoing Simmel's comparison of rural with city life, Frank initially lauded the possibilities available in America, in comparison with a Europe that had been weighed down by tradition and history, for individual development. As Blake Stimson notes, for Frank, 'coming to America was freedom.'[186] In this light, Frank sought to 'be more American than the Americans.'[187] In other words, rather than challenging the fundamental liberalism of the society that he critiqued, he posited that it had failed to be liberal enough. Through this ideological prism and his institutional status, Frank became strongly connected to the universalising liberal modernisation championed by America in the postwar era and instituted in Japan during the Occupation.

The American values with which we might associate Frank were not only introduced through the Occupation into Japan, but also imposed globally by

[184] Erik Mortenson, "The Ghost of Humanism: Rethinking the Subjective Turn in Postwar American Photography," *History of Photography* 38, no. 4 (2014): 422.
[185] Bezner, *Photography and Politics in America: From the New Deal into the Cold War*, 178-9.
[186] Blake Stimson, *The Pivot of the World: Photography and Its Nation* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2006), 129-31.
[187] Ibid.

America as a bulwark against communism. Because of the reliance on the United States military for the bulk of its military defences, Japan was incontrovertibly situated on the side of the United States. Options such as membership of the Non-aligned Movement were not possible. The following image from *Tōkyōjin* reminds us in an overtly symbolic manner of Japan's place within the Cold War context (figure 12).

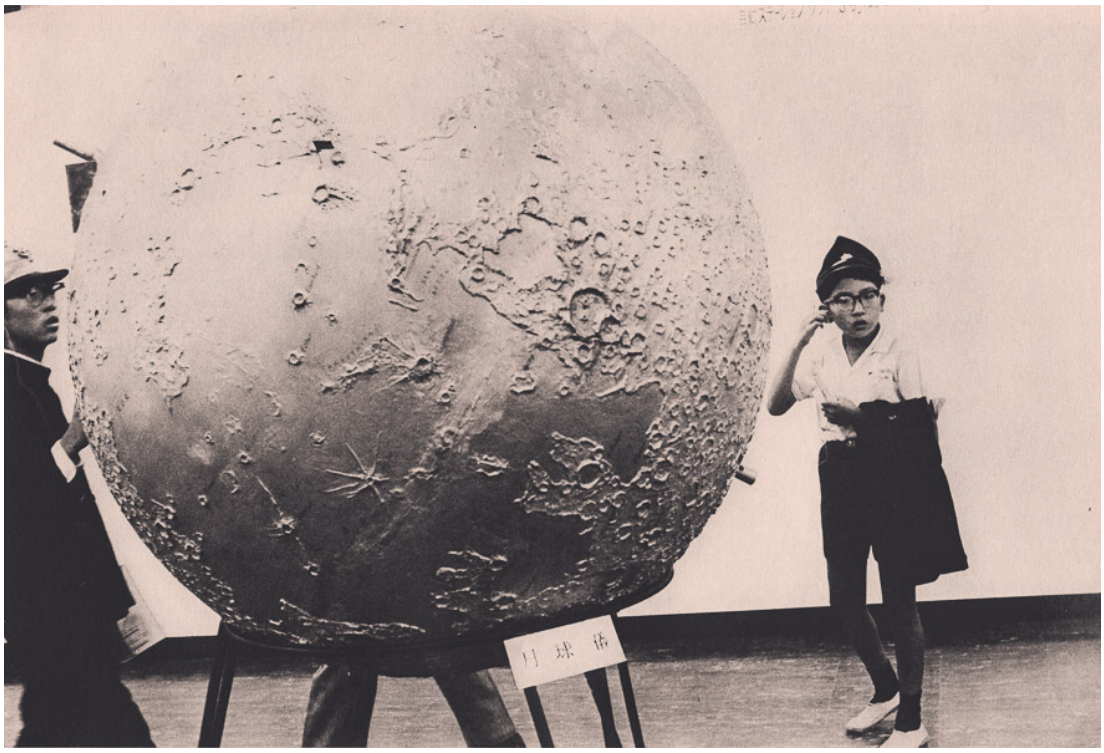

Figure 12: "Chiyoda-ku: Science Museum, October 17. Exhibition of the Space Developments in the Soviet Union" from *Tōkyōjin* by Takanashi Yutaka, 1974.

The globe, a mapped replica of the moon, dominates the space in the image, a representation of the space race, which might be regarded as the symbolic apotheosis of industrial modernity and dominance of which was accordingly an obsessively pursued goal of both sides during the Cold War. The extent to which the model of the moon crowds out the humans in the frame by seeming to fall on the young man at left, obfuscating all but the legs of the person behind it, and dwarfing the boy at the right, again impresses upon the viewer the power of industrial modernity in the postwar era. There is an irony to the caption which tells us that this is a display of Soviet power, not America as we might initially assume. Taken in the early 1960s, when the USSR held ascendency over the USA

in its explorations of space and forays to the moon, the image reminds us of the Cold War tensions that were woven into the fabric of daily life during that era.

Conclusion

When placed within the context of global patterns of capitalism in the urban spaces of the twentieth century, Takanashi's critique of Japan's postwar modernity reveals the complex tension between the rationalising, objectifying forces of capital and the human subject's struggle to maintain a sense of individual and cultural identity. The industrialisation process at the heart of Japan's rapid modernisation during the late nineteenth and then twentieth century produced similar social tensions within Tokyo's urban spaces as other major cities in America and Europe. These tensions were a product of the structural inequities that defined relations between capital and labour, and manifested in terms of both exploitation and suffering and in resistance by those exploited. The negative aspects of city life were coalescent with new possibilities for individual freedom from the traditional structures of rural spaces. Such possibilities seem absent in *Tōkyōjin,* however, and instead the images are infused with the tensions of Japan's postwar capitalist society. These are not the tensions of earlier periods that were characterised by a clear delineation between labour and capital, or between the subjective individual and the objectifying cityscape. Rather, the borders between subject and object have become diffuse, rendering an urban space that is both overwhelming and disorienting for the individual. In this way, *Tōkyōjin* brings our attention to the ambiguous forms of power that characterise post-industrial capitalist society, and also to the similarly ambiguous relationship between the individual and the rationalising forces that govern urban space.

CHAPTER THREE:

Mythologies Dark and Light: Dialectical Images of Tokyo's Margins in Naitō Masatoshi's *Tōkyō*: *Toshi no yami o genshi suru*

Introduction

Naitō Masatoshi (b.1938) originally discovered photography through his involvement with the Waseda University photography club. Graduating from Waseda in 1961 with a degree in applied chemistry, Naitō began his working life as a research chemist, a position he left in order to pursue photography full-time. He earned some acclaim with his first project, entitled 'SF (science fiction) photography,' which portrayed reactions between chemicals and high polymer compounds.[188] Around this time, however, Naitō developed an interest in Japanese religious and folkloric traditions that came to strongly influence his work. Although his initial focus was on the *sokushinbutsu* (self-mummification) practices undertaken by Buddhist priests in the Tōhoku region, indigenous tradition generally became a central feature of his work, which often received high critical acclaim. In 1966 the Japan Photo Critics nominated Naitō as best new artist for his photography of the *sokushinbutsu* tradition and he won the Domon Ken Prize in 1983 for his depiction of an ascetic Buddhist order in Tōhoku. In addition to his photographic work, Naitō has published several academic commentaries on Tōhoku folk traditions. The focus of this chapter, however, is the series entitled *Tōkyō*: *Toshi no yami o genshi suru* (*Tokyo: Hallucinating on the Darkness of the City*).[189] The subject of the 1986 annual award by the Photographic Society of Japan, this project diverges in subject matter from the photographer's interest in folklore to consider the modern

[188] Matsuda Takako, "Naito Masatoshi," in *The History of Japanese Photography*, ed. John Junkerman (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 352.
[189] Masatoshi Naitō, *Tōkyō: Toshi no yami o genshi suru (Tokyo, 1970-85: Hallucinating on the Darkness of the City)* (Tokyo: Meicho Shuppan, 1985).

urban spaces of Tokyo. Nevertheless, as discussed below, *Tōkyō*: *Toshi no yami o genshi suru* (hereafter referred to as *Tōkyō*) maintains thematic links between the modern urban space and Japan's premodern past.

Naitō's shift from a career in applied chemistry to documenting native traditions suggests an interest in the interplay between the modern and archaic, a theme that features throughout his photographs. From an aesthetic point of view, this binary appears sharply defined in Naitō's images. He creates strong contrast between a blackness that represents an enchanted past and a blinding whiteness that is often achieved by using a camera flash – there are very few tones of grey in the images. The elements of modern and archaic are further delineated by Naitō's use of extreme contrast and film grain, an effect produced through 'push-processing,' a specific process applied to monochrome negatives whereby films rated for daylight are exposed and processed in the same way as those designed for low light. This dramatically increases contrast and exaggerates the visual presence of the film grain, producing the impression of rough texture in the final image.

We might assume that, to some extent, Naitō's decision to frequently use strong flash throughout the *Tōkyō* series is expedient, given that many scenes he captures are poorly lit. It is also clear, however, that an equally strong motivation was creative. In the foreword to *Tōkyō*, Naitō tells of seeking a 'certain darkness' in which the 'real psyche of Tokyo is hidden.'[190] He equates this darkness to Japanese folk mythology, noting that in premodern times there had always existed 'marvellous dark sites' exterior to and hidden from daily existence.[191] These sites were located in the mountain ranges that run the length of the Japanese archipelago, and housed in temples that were 'spiritual sanctuaries' for societal outcastes.[192] The purpose of Naitō's flash, therefore, is 'illuminating the dark' of Tokyo's urban spaces in much the same way as his previous work illuminated the dark of the mountain spaces. The frequent use of the flash is

[190] Ibid., n.p.g.
[191] Ibid., n.p.g.
[192] Ibid.

intended to uncover traces of the premodern world in Tokyo, a 'vision of "Edo" [the premodern name for the capital of Japan] beneath the cover of "Tokyo".'[193] Naitō saw this use of flash as unique, somewhat theatrically describing himself in the early 1970s as 'the first person in the world to use strobe in a conscious, focused way as photographic expression.' [194] Marilyn Ivy, whose erudite discussion of Naitō's photography informs parts of the analysis below, refers to this statement as a 'hyperbolic' claim that speaks to 'the fetishized place of flash in Naitō's photography.'[195] While the claim is largely intended by Naitō to differentiate himself from photojournalists, whose use of flash is a matter of necessity, Ivy points out that, through his particular aesthetic approach, Naitō in fact 'attempts to use the style of press photos.'[196] This 'press photo' use of the flash was most notably seen in the work of infamous crime photographer Weegee (real name Arthur Fellig, 1899-1968). Weegee's explicit New York crime scene photographs shocked the comfortable existence of many American newspaper readers during the 1930s and 40s, and a similar intention to shock is apparent in Naitō's Tokyo images.[197]

The shock experienced by viewers of Naitō's images is not merely a product of the dramatic aesthetics produced by the photographer's use of light, composition, and processing techniques. There is a confronting edge, also, to his choice of subject matter. Naitō directs his camera towards the margins of modern Tokyo, focussing on the violence, the strangeness, and the suffering and distress in this landscape, while also exploring the moments of meaning found there. The *Tōkyō* images, therefore, are not simply provocations devoid of any other intent than to astound. Rather, their arresting manner is reflective of their function as what Walter Benjamin referred to as 'dialectical images.'[198] These are moments in

[193] Ibid.
[194] Naitō, cited in Marilyn Ivy, "Dark Enlightenment: Naitō Masatoshi's Flash," in *Photographies East: The Camera and Its Histories in East and Southeast Asia*, ed. Rosalind C. Morris (London: Duke University Press, 2009), 234.
[195] Ibid.
[196] Ibid.
[197] Ibid., 249.
[198] Benjamin wrote about this concept in various places, but the passage that best encapsulates it is found in Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 462.; N2a.

which the past erupts into the present, undermining modern perceptions of history as neatly separated from the present.

This chapter will draw on Benjamin's concept of 'dialectical images' in order to demonstrate Naitō's balancing of the premodern and modern through the motifs of dark and light. The discussion will particularly endeavour to demonstrate how this concept can be transferred beyond the written medium as Benjamin originally envisaged and applied both ontologically and in a representational sense to photography. A linking of Benjamin's theory with Naitō's photographs will assist in an understanding of the specific critique that the *Tōkyō* series makes of modern Japanese society in the 1970s and 80s. In his efforts to locate the premodern within the modern, Naitō exposes the chaos left in the wake of the technological development that accompanied Japan's high speed postwar economic growth. Highlighting the dialectic embodied within his images also permits consideration of ways in which the persistence of the archaic might be understood as a source of redemption. The following analysis will first discuss Naitō's depiction of Tokyo in the context of Benjamin's idea of modern crisis arising from the tension between humankind and technology. It will then examine the photographer's use of extreme contrasts of dark and light, placing this element of his work within the context of Benjamin's dialectical image. Finally, the discussion considers how this aesthetic approach, in combination with the subject matter featured – in this instance largely members of Tokyo's marginalised homeless community – offers the possibility of redemption. By directing our attention to the continued presence within modernity of past ways of being that were considered lost or superseded, Naitō's *Tōkyō* images remind us of the aporias in modern notions of progress. Further, his approach destabilises simplistic binaries of modern/traditional, a discursive opposition that often takes spatialised form as urban versus rural. The images discussed in this chapter encourage us to look beyond these rather problematic divisions towards a more complex view of Japan's postwar modernity which, as this thesis has thus far emphasised, was afflicted by a deep sense of ambiguity.

The New Cosmology of Capitalist Modernity

On examining the images in the *Tōkyō* series, one is struck by a sense of crisis, which is conveyed in ways that include the depiction of the aftermath of violence and the apparently desperate and degrading circumstances of the city's homeless. This reflects more broadly the tensions between technological modernity and the primordial world of nature which, combined with a premodern authenticity, for Naitō infused the foundations of Japanese society at the time he worked. These tensions are precariously balanced to the point that society seems on the brink of collapse. This sentiment is expressed in the following image of a building on fire, the second photograph in the series (figure 1).

Figure 1: "A fire at Hotel New Japan (Akasaka 1982)" from *Tōkyō: Toshi no yami o genshi suru* (*Tokyo, 1970-85: Hallucinating on the Darkness of the City*) by Naitō Masatoshi, 1985.

The early placement of this image in the book's sequence confirms that Naitō not only intended the series to portray Tokyo's vestiges of premodern life but also to critique modern Japan. While such an intention is not explicitly iterated in the written introduction to the collection, it is intimated in Naitō's reference to the

extent of the changes that Tokyo's urban spaces had undergone in the fifteen years taken to produce the *Tōkyō* series.[199] The image above is one of the more direct expressions of the crisis that seems to be unfolding in Tokyo as a result of these changes. Here, Naitō does not employ the flash, but nonetheless produces dramatic contrast between light and dark. An ominous blackness spreads from the left side of the building that is countered by the relative lightness at right. The fire fighters who battle the crisis are reduced to simple outlines, appearing powerless to counter the encroachment of this shadowy force. The helicopter, a symbol of technological modernity, is rendered opaque by smoke and hovers impotently above the scene. While these elements seem to signify hopelessness, there are in fact various aspects of the image that contest a simple message of uncontrolled disaster. One is the balancing of light and dark in the image: neither the light areas – symbolic of modern 'enlightenment' and technology – nor the dark areas – 'unenlightened' premodernity – are in absolute ascendancy. Also, we might note that things are not so out of control that the firemen are unable to stand atop the building while it burns. This ambiguity of meaning does not, however, dilute the initial sense of catastrophe, nor does it reduce the power of Naitō's critique of Japan's rapid economic and technological development in the postwar era. Instead the coexistence of seemingly contradictory elements points to the tenuous balance of forces at play in that society. Naitō's project is not simply a refutation of the modern and subsequent reification of the archaic, but instead directs our attention to the coexistence of these in modern society to show us the dangers that accompanied rapid and seemingly unfettered technological progress in postwar Japan. Principal among these dangers is the possibility that the new technologies have exceeded human control and/or society's capacity to direct these technologies in beneficial ways.

Darkness plays a figurative role in Naitō's broader attempt to expose the myths of modern progress. It is, as Ivy notes, 'the literal trope of modernity's other, the underside of civic enlightenment and progressive history.'[200] Naitō's darkness

[199] Naitō, *Tōkyō: Toshi no yami o genshi suru (Tokyo, 1970-85: Hallucinating on the Darkness of the City)*, 222.
[200] Ivy, "Dark Enlightenment: Naitō Masatoshi's Flash," 245.

disrupts what Walter Benjamin called the 'dream sleep' of capitalist modernity, a 'natural phenomenon' that in the nineteenth century 'came over Europe and [brought] with it, a reactivation of mythical powers.'[201] These powers drive modern development and underpin the commodity fetishism in which modern subjects invest their utopian wishes and desires.[202] In doing so, these subjects supplant the cosmologies of earlier centuries based in the rhythms of nature. As Graeme Gilloch observes, for Benjamin the most acute manifestation of this new mythology is the modern metropolis, both by being the fundamental locus of modernity, and by bearing within it the indelible reminders of the unfulfilled 'wants and aspirations' of modern society.[203] These traces persist in the form of the decaying edifices of buildings and the detritus of past fashions, the superseded consumer objects that have been discarded but not erased entirely. [204] Further, as the fundamental spatial manifestation of modern technology, the city constituted a 'new nature' for human society. For Benjamin the importance of technology for humankind is not, as 'the imperialists' would have it, 'the mastery of nature' but in its mediatory capacity 'between nature and man.' [205] Technology is a '*physis*...through which mankind's contact with the cosmos takes a new and different form from that which it had in nations and families.'[206]

Much like the 'old' nature, this new *physis* (an ancient Greek term meaning 'nature') was an unpredictable entity whose forces humankind continually struggled to control. The First World War was a particularly destructive articulation of this struggle. Benjamin describes this eruption of technology-driven violence as:

> ...an attempt at new and unprecedented comingling with the cosmic powers. Human multitudes, gases, electrical forces were hurled into the open country, high frequency currents coursed through the open landscape, new

[201] Benjamin, cited in Graeme Gilloch, *Myth and Metropolis: Walter Benjamin and the City* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), 105.
[202] Ibid.
[203] Ibid.
[204] Ibid.
[205] Walter Benjamin, *One Way Street and Other Writings* (London: LND, 1978), 104.
[206] Ibid.

> constellations rose in the sky, aerial space and ocean depths thundered with propellers, and everywhere sacrificial shafts were dug in Mother Earth[207]

This was the first time that humankind's 'wooing of the cosmos' was conducted on a 'planetary scale, that is, in the spirit of technology.'[208] The principal reason for the consequent death and destruction was 'the lust for profit of the ruling class [who] sought satisfaction through it, [and so] technology betrayed man and turned the bridal bed into a bloodbath.'[209] In other words, it is the capitalist relation to technology that unleashes the most negative forces of this new nature upon human society. For Benjamin, the communist revolutions that sprung up in the wake of the First World War were the first real attempts by humankind to 'bring the new body under its control.'[210]

Naitō's representation of modern Tokyo resonates with Benjamin's account of capitalist modernity in its frequent emphasis on the disastrous aspects of Japan's postwar urban society. As symbolised by the above image of the burning building (figure 1), Japanese society is constituted by a tenuous relationship between humankind and the new technological 'nature' identified by Benjamin. As apparent in many of the *Tōkyō* images, including figure 2 below, this dynamic at times produces disastrous outcomes.

[207] Ibid.
[208] Ibid.
[209] Ibid.
[210] Ibid.

Figure 2: "Traffic accident (Suzaki 1970)" from *Tōkyō: Toshi no yami o genshi suru* (*Tokyo, 1970-85: Hallucinating on the Darkness of the City*) by Naitō Masatoshi, 1985.

Like so many in the series, this image of a traffic accident is divided between light and dark. Illuminated by Naitō's flash, the twisted wreckage of the automobile, a Japanese-made Honda, conveys a sense of the full violence of vehicles colliding. The visceral sense of the damage wrought upon the human body in such a collision is represented by the splashes of some unknown liquid upon the wreckage. We cannot know whether it is blood, some type of gasoline or oil emitted by the vehicle during impact, or a substance from another source entirely, yet the inference of trauma is unmistakable. The stark light of the flash and the positioning of the wreck in the foreground combine to emphasise the danger it poses to the small boy standing in the relative darkness of the image's background. The wrecked vehicle indicates the threat that technological modernity presents to the lingering vestiges of the premodern – the idea of unsullied nature that the boy suggests. The wreckage itself invokes modernity in a twofold manner: if we surmise that the car was destroyed in a collision, the implication is catastrophe, of technology exceeding human control. The sheer extent to which the car has been destroyed, however, recalls the damage inflicted

by a car compactor. This conveys a sense of the vehicle as the output of an industrial wrecking yard. The vehicle might thus be considered one of Benjamin's discarded consumer fetishes, a highly coveted item already superseded by something new, part of modernity's detritus. Another feature of this image is the way space is collapsed within the frame, an effect engendered by the black expanse behind the boy. This reduces a sense of linear perspective so that he seems to float, only lightly anchored to the pavement. The minimised perspectival depth also works to give the boy an equal presence within the image. This balancing of elements is a feature throughout Naitō's *Tōkyō* photographs, and indicates an approach which, despite the repeated juxtaposition of modern and premodern, deemphasises the symbolic importance of linear time by giving both temporal aspects equal importance in the composition of his images.

The Dialectics of Dark and Light in Naitō's Tokyo

The previous two images (figures 1 and 2) illustrate the symbolic importance of darkness in Naitō's work as a foil to the bright glare of modernity. We might regard this light in a universalised sense as representative of the fundamental characteristics of capitalist modernity regardless of where it appears. The darkness, on the other hand, which Ivy describes as 'a dark landscape on the margins of the enlightened discourses and scenes of Japanese modernity triumphant' is similarly universal in its capacity as modernity's other.[211] Yet in certain ways Naitō's dark spaces nonetheless also connect with more particularistic associations of darkness in traditional Japanese culture. Given Naitō's interest in nativist mythology, it is not difficult to see the influence of Yanagita Kunio (1875-1962), Japan's foremost folklorist, upon his work. This influence is most apparent in consideration of Naitō's 1983 book, *Tōno Monogatari*, which takes its title from Yanagita's famous 1911 compendium of folk tales sourced from the remote mountain village of Tōno in northeastern Iwate Province. Ivy contends that Naitō's depiction of Tōno places him in 'a lineage of aesthetic practitioners who have conjoined darkness with the place of nativist homecoming, with an essential Japan.'[212]

[211] Ivy, "Dark Enlightenment: Naitō Masatoshi's Flash," 232.
[212] Ibid.

One such practitioner is Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, whose 1933 essay *In Praise of Shadows* (*In'ei raisan*)[213] makes the case for a distinctively Japanese (although at times expanded to 'Oriental') aesthetic that values the mystery of shadow over the explicitness rendered by modern, electric forms of illumination. This is not to say that Tanizaki seeks a world shrouded in darkness, but that 'we [Japanese, or 'Orientals'] do prefer a pensive luster to a shallow brilliance, a murky light that, whether in a stone or an artefact, bespeaks a sheen of antiquity.'[214] Here he refers to the Japanese (and Chinese) predilection for opaque gemstones over those putatively most favoured in the West such as crystals.[215] Later, in his observations of the 'banquets and balls' thrown by Western foreigners which he attended in Yokohama, Tanizaki attributes this pallid colouring to Japanese skin itself when compared to that of Westerners. For the Japanese women whom he observed, no amount of powdering could 'efface the darkness that lay below their skin.'[216] This is one of countless examples through which Tanizaki draws a distinction between electrified Western light that illuminates indiscriminately and Japanese lighting, which, according to the writer, does so in a selective and muted fashion. This distinction is further drawn through comparisons between Kabuki and Nō performances. In premodern times the vibrancy of Kabuki had been tempered by dimmer lighting, whereas now 'the gaudy Kabuki colors under the glare of Western floodlamps verge on a vulgarity of which one quickly tires.'[217] Nō, on the other hand, was more subdued in both costume and lighting and best performed in old, timeworn venues: 'the older the structure the better, for it is an essential condition of the Nō that the stage be left in the darkness in which it has stood since antiquity.'[218] According to Tanizaki, Nō theatre performed in this way is historically representative of Japan's premodern past. He argues that, 'The darkness of the Nō stage is after all the darkness of the

[213] Originally published in Japanese over two issues in the periodical *Keizai ōrai.* Here I refer to the English version translated by Thomas J. Harper and Edward G. Seidensticker.
[214] Jun'ichirō Tanizaki, *In Praise of Shadows*, trans. Thomas J. Harper and Edward G. Seidensticker (New Haven: Island Books, 1977), 11.
[215] Ibid.
[216] Ibid., 32.
[217] Ibid., 24.
[218] Ibid., 26.

domestic architecture of the day, and Nō costumes, even if a bit more splendid in pattern and colour, are by and large those that were worn by court nobles and feudal lords.'[219]

While there is a humorous playfulness to some aspects of Tanizaki's essay, his idea of darkness clearly is analogous to (and may have influenced) Naitō's aesthetic approach in the *Tōkyō* images. This similarity is apparent in the photographer's stated aim to expose a darkness that is symbolic of a certain premodern mystery in Tokyo's urban spaces. Further, there are also links to the aesthetics of Nō as described by Tanizaki. Although the elite theatre form of Nō was generally performed in the private residences of wealthy landowners whereas Naitō's images were captured in Tokyo's public areas, in both instances the spaces of everyday living are a backdrop for the unfolding drama rather than, for instance, a theatre set or photography studio. It is Tanizaki's binary of brightness as modern (Western) and darkness as premodern (Japanese), however, that has most relevance to Naitō's aesthetic approach. Naitō's use of flash and other techniques – such as the 'burning in' (darkening) of the background in his photographs – makes the human subjects resemble performers on a stage of his making. There are significant differences in tonal contrast, however: Naitō does not create the subtle variance of shadows that Tanizaki's admires, or dim the lighting of the central subject. Rather, darkness in Naitō's images is unequivocal, a void engendered by the equally unequivocal brightness with which his subject is lit. As Ivy writes, Naitō extends the illuminative capacity of the flash beyond the level of expediency 'until light becomes its obverse, a blinding nullity with the indeterminacy of darkness.'[220] This use of contrast is pushed to extremes in the image below (figure 3).

[219] Ibid.
[220] Ivy, "Dark Enlightenment: Naitō Masatoshi's Flash," 229.

Figure 3: "Junkyard (Fukagawa 1971)" from *Tōkyō: Toshi no yami o genshi suru* (*Tokyo, 1970-85: Hallucinating on the Darkness of the City*) by Naitō Masatoshi, 1985.

Here, Naitō's flash almost effaces its subject, suggesting modernity's threat to the individual while simultaneously evoking the premodern. While it was possible in the previous two images to identify bisected spaces of light and dark, blackness in this photograph occupies the top and right edges of the frame. In this way, the image reminds us of Tanizaki's Nō stage, upon which the woman, rendered almost translucent, is contrasted with the industrial refuse she passes. The harsh light of the flash embodies (Western) technological modernity, whose brightness overwhelms her (Japanese) subjective identity to the extent of partially erasing her facial features. Contra Tanizaki's observation about the inefficacy of face powder in concealing the darkness beneath a Japanese woman's skin, here, the artifice of Naitō's flash manages to completely obliterate any shadow from the woman's face. Yet rather than simply render her modern, her ghostly whiteness, floating in front of a black background, suggests the premodern world of folk mythology. We might recall in particular the recurring motif of the female ghost in Japanese folktales such as Yanagita's *Tales of Tōno* (*Tōno monogatari*), which, as noted above, Naitō himself had used as the title of one of his collections. In

these tales, the female apparition often connotes violence, either as the object of past violence or as a figure who leads an unwary (male) wanderer towards dark ends.

It might seem incongruous to talk of the simultaneity of the modern and premodern in this way, two elements by definition opposed to each other. Naitō's Tokyo images, however, undercut such neat modern/premodern binaries, pointing instead to what Benjamin saw as the falsity of modernity's central premise. This is the claim that the modern is a new iteration cleanly separated from the past and governed by a transparent logic that is anathema to the superstitious thinking which previously ordered the world. Gilloch writes that, for Benjamin, 'the definitive experience of the metropolitan environment is the never-ending encounter with the nothing-new, ceaseless repetition. It is the fundamental basis of the mythic character of modernity.'[221] Benjamin contested the idea that the modern age was an apotheosis of historical progress, that human civilisation had transcended its prehistory.[222] Although the very conception of a 'prehistorical' era reflects the extent to which modernity externalises the past, rendering it separate to daily experience, nothing in modern society is entirely new, everything is a reiteration of past forms. Our blindness to this fact speaks to the persistence of mythological thinking, now manifest in our faith in the inherent goodness of technological development and market capitalism.

Benjamin sought to expose the new mythology of the modern by paying close attention to the detritus of historical progress. Susan Buck-Morss encapsulates this project as follows:

> Where the megalomania of monumental proportions, of "bigger is better" equated both capitalist and imperialist expansion with the progressive course of history, Benjamin sought out the small, discarded objects, the

[221] Gilloch, *Myth and Metropolis: Walter Benjamin and the City*, 121.
[222] Ibid., 10-12.

> outdated buildings and fashions which, precisely as the "trash of history", were evidence of its unprecedented material destruction. [223]

From this perspective, it is worth looking at the other main 'subject' in Naitō's image above (figure 3), namely the pile of industrial-automotive detritus past which the woman walks. While in this instance we see the detritus of industrial progress, rather than the fashion industry in which Benjamin was particularly interested, the decaying parts of machinery nonetheless speak to the 'unprecedented material destruction' that accompanies technological (historical) progress. Also striking is the way in which the ghostly figure of the woman contrasts with this large pile of industrial wreckage, a juxtaposition of enchantment and modernity that embodies Naitō's effort to expose the temporal ambiguity of Tokyo's modern spaces. In this context we might remember that this was a city seen to have transcended not only the premodern past but also the more recent violence of war. If the presence of the woman as 'ghost' exposes this myth of a past/present binary, the industrial debris featured also undermines the modern myth of teleological progress by confirming the persistent presence of objects and experiences thought to have been superseded.

The recurring coalescence of modern and archaic in Naitō's photographs evokes Benjamin's idea of a 'dialectical image': a new way to understand history, an alternative to the model of historical progress. In this oft-quoted passage from his *Arcades Project,* Benjamin articulates this alternate model as follows:

> It's not that what is past casts its light on what is present, or what is present its light on what is past; rather, image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation. In other words, image is dialectics at a standstill. For while the relation of the present to the past is a purely temporal, continuous one, the relation of what has been to the now is dialectical: is not progression but image, suddenly emergent. –

[223] Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1997), 93.

> Only dialectical images are genuine images (that is, not archaic); and the place where one encounters them is language.[224]

The convergence of the present and past in the dialectical image is not simply informative – to assume so is to rely upon a notion of progressive development – but a recognising of the archaic, the mythical, in the present. In this way the dialectical image is a counter concept to historical progress. While Benjamin's focus above is language rather than visual image, his ideas have strong applicability to Naitō's *Tōkyō* photographs. There are also, however, some differences between Naitō's project and Benjamin's dialectical image. For example it is clear that Benjamin does not mean this to refer to the literal image of a photograph, but to a happening, a moment. Regardless of the differences, it also true that while the photographic image is an artefact, an already produced item inscribed with the event witnessed by the camera, photographs nonetheless also bear within them the present (signified in the encounter between viewer and image), and the future (as absent corollary to the historicity of the photograph). The photograph thus constitutes the dialectical encounter of past and present which Benjamin saw as a more appropriate approach to history.

Expanding upon Benjamin's ideas, Eduardo Cadava argues, in fact, that photography constitutes the ideal 'language' through which we might 'encounter' the dialectical image.[225] As Cadava notes, Benjamin's writing on history consistently evokes photography in both form and content, displaying 'the imagistic character of his thought'.[226] This affinity with the photographic is further evidenced by Benjamin's deep interest in the medium – for instance he produced two essays on the subject[227] and counted several photographers as friends. In one instance he actually encourages writers to 'start taking photographs ourselves.'[228] This is not meant in a literal sense but as an exhortation towards an imagistic style of writing that prioritises description

[224] Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 462;N2a.
[225] Eduardo Cadava, *Words of Light: Theses on the Photography of History* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997).
[226] Ibid., xix-xx.
[227] *A Small History of Photography* and *The Work of Art in the Age of Technical Reproducibility*
[228] Walter Benjamin, *Understanding Brecht*, trans. Anna Bostock (London: NLB, 1977), 95.

over narrative. As Cadava observes, however, it is the camera's ability to disrupt the linear flow of time that has most relevance to Benjamin's theory of historical representation. He contends that Benjamin's position was in contradistinction to prevailing discourses of progressive history in its affirmation of 'a movement of interruption that suspends time,' a movement which clearly correlates with the camera's similar ability.[229] Further, Cadava contends that photography spatialises time, disrupting its linear flow so that (here he quotes Benjamin) 'the past and the present moment flash into a constellation' and thus the photograph 'interrupts history and opens up another possibility of history, one that spaces time and temporalizes space.'[230] In this way, 'the photographic image – like the image in general – is [quoting Benjamin again] "dialectics at a standstill".'[231] Within the photograph past, present, and future coalesce, not according to temporal sequence but as a constellation, a spatialised representation in which each element is observable as a separate entity, yet dependent upon and connected to the elements around it.

It is therefore reasonable on an ontological level to equate Naitō's photographic project with Benjamin's dialectical image. I would further contend that, in the *Tōkyō* images, Naitō accomplishes this dialectic on a *representational* level, that is, through the symbolism of content and aesthetic style. This is achieved, as we have already seen, through the juxtaposition of the modern and archaic within the image. This is explicitly evident in the image below (figure 4).

[229] Cadava, *Words of Light: Theses on the Photography of History*, 60.
[230] Ibid., 61.
[231] Ibid.

Figure 4: "Homeless person crouching down (Tsukiji 1971)" from *Tōkyō: Toshi no yami o genshi suru* (*Tokyo, 1970-85: Hallucinating on the Darkness of the City*) by Naitō Masatoshi, 1985.

On a symbolic level, the 'the past and the present moment flash into a constellation' within this photograph. Rather than being a by-product of the camera flash, darkness in this instance was most likely produced by a combination of camera exposure settings and later manipulation of the printed photograph through the 'burning in' process. In this process, selected areas of the photographic print are exposed to more light at the same time at which the negative image is being projected onto light-sensitive paper. In the above photograph, the effect is to darken sections near the edges of the image, particularly the bottom half of the frame in which the central figure is located. As in the previous image (figure 3) the impression created is that of a hyper-modern Nō stage in which darkness and light are pushed to polar extremes. Black spaces dominate the bottom half of the frame and thus create the impression of this area as the archaic. Shadows, which are a natural by-product of the strong sunlight but which were also most likely exaggerated further during printing, conceal any facial features, making the gender of the central figure difficult to discern. The manner in which the person has draped him or

herself in what appear to be old blankets and rags suggests an old lady wearing a cloak, yet this can only be speculation. This attire, however, symbolises the archaic in a twofold manner. First, it is a castoff from modern society: being clothed in modern society's refuse infers the same status as 'refuse' upon the person. The hunched posture of the figure furthermore connotes an elderly person, the elderly as a group being 'refuse' in a culture that persistently seeks the new and the young. Second, in conjunction with the blackness surrounding the figure and the dark void where a face should be, the clothing evokes that of a folklore figure from an enchanted past. The manifold meanings attached to the human subject are also observable in the depicted space itself. With its office buildings, the top portion anchors the image in modern times, as does the incidental greenery of the urban space; this modern space is set against the darkness below, a premodern region. This juxtaposition does not, however, constitute a neat binary. Naitō's liberal application of black to the bottom of the image gives it a destabilising ambiguity suggesting tenuousness at the very foundations of modern Tokyo. This reminds us of how the past that has supposedly been overcome continues to haunt the quotidian spaces of modernity. To borrow from Benjamin, past and present are here coalescent in an ambiguous 'constellation'. Time is neither teleological nor linear, but spatialised, destabilising the comfortable assumptions of historical progress that underpin modern society.

At its most fundamental level the dialectical image is an irruption of the past into the comfortable present. In an instant this irruption lays bare the myth of modern progress by exposing the persistence of that 'past' which is thought to have been surpassed. In this respect, Naitō's images of Tokyo are dialectical both ontologically (existing as a photographic act), and as representation (the product of the photographer's particular methodology). This duality is proper to Benjamin's concept: Max Pensky notes that the dialectical image operates on several planes. The two most important are 'as an *event* of a new time' but also as

'the *production* of a materialist critic who has mastered a methodology.'[232] In either case, the effect is a disruption of familiar narratives. We must therefore consider what it was that Naitō sought to disrupt in his *Tōkyō* images. Ivy's work is instructive here. Commenting on the 'standardized and orderly' manner of 'city life…in Japan,' she argues that 'to find those "spots of darkness"' that Naitō seeks 'is to find those instances of poverty, deprivation, and crime that are less visible' in Tokyo than in other major cities in the world.[233]

The ordering of society to which Ivy refers was a response to the rapid postwar economic growth that was facilitated by centrally organised development via the triumvirate of government, bureaucracy, and industry. This growth brought about an increase in population, particularly in the major cities such as Tokyo. Tokyo itself was seen to be overcrowded and congested. It was these issues that Tanaka Kakuei (1918-1993), who became prime minister between 1972-4 and who was embroiled in the Lockheed scandal, sought to overcome through his development plan outlined in the book *Nippon rettō kaiso-rōn* (*Building a New Japan: a Plan for Remodelling the Japanese Archipelago*).[234] Tanaka's plan involved extensive remodelling of the Japanese landscape via extensions of roads, train lines, and by the relocation of industrial production to the outskirts of major cities like Tokyo.[235] Tanaka's plan is a clear example of the extent to which the Japanese landscape, and the city in particular, was increasingly shaped by the organising logic of capitalism. As discussed in chapter one, the urban landscape has always been arranged and striated according to the flows of capital. Yet it is possible to argue, as Ivy does, that because of the extent to which centrally managed state control had dominated urban and social development, in comparison to urban sites in, for example, America, Japanese cities were characterised by 'the diminution of danger, of difference, and of certain erotic

[232] Max Pensky, "Method and Time: Benjamin's Dialectical Images," in *The Cambridge Companion to Walter Benjamin*, ed. David S. Ferris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 194-5.
[233] Ivy, "Dark Enlightenment: Naitō Masatoshi's Flash," 246-7.
[234] Kakuei Tanaka, *Building a New Japan: A Plan for Remodelling the Japanese Archipelago* (Tokyo: Simul Press, 1973, c. 1972).
[235] John Sargent, "Remodelling the Japanese Archipelago: The Tanaka Plan," *The Geographical Journal* 139, no. 3 (1973).

possibilities of the city.'[236] Rather than erase, however, these Japanese cities merely more successfully concealed the 'danger' and 'difference' referred to above and it is the 'dangerous' and 'different' irruptions into the 'order' of Japanese society that Naitō so effectively captures in his images. In doing so he explodes the myth that a society neatly and peacefully arranged according to the needs of capitalist enterprise is cleanly divided from the past to the benefit of all.

Provocation and Redemption at the Margins

Danger and difference are what Naitō seeks to bring to the surface by photographing the marginal people and spaces of modern Tokyo. In addition to images of catastrophe such as burning buildings or wrecked vehicles, a key motif that signifies danger is the use in his images of the darkness referred to above. The power of this darkness is often augmented by the disorienting manner in which many of the images are composed. The majority are taken from close-up, seemingly with a wide-angle lens that adds a distorted curvature to straight lines and also creates a sense of separation between foreground and background. Additionally, perspective is often angled in such a way that disorients the viewer's sense of context – at times it is difficult to know from which direction one is viewing an image. These effects are further enhanced by the physical characteristics of the actual *Tōkyō* book, in which images not only entirely fill the A4 sized page (there are no borders), but are often spread across two of these pages. The combined effect is a sense of a world without clear moorings, underpinned by violence and chaos. Within this chaos, the areas of black emit a magnetic attraction, drawing the viewer into the dark chaos of prehistory. The disorienting effect produced by these aesthetic devices is most acute in the images that evoke the dangerous underside of modernity. In the following photograph (figure 5) the deprivation of those at the margins of urban society irrupts into the seemingly safe, orderly, and homogenous Tokyo space.

[236] Ivy, "Dark Enlightenment: Naitō Masatoshi's Flash," 246-7.

Figure 5: "Unconscious man lying (Ueno 1983)" from *Tōkyō: Toshi no yami o genshi suru* (*Tokyo, 1970-85: Hallucinating on the Darkness of the City*) by Naitō Masatoshi, 1985.

With its confronting subject matter, use of flash, and the way people are crowded around the central figure – whose desperate condition is most strongly reflected in the exposure of his buttocks to public view – this photograph recalls the images for which the sensationalist American press photographer, Weegee, was so well known. Unlike much of Weegee's material, however, this image is not one of exploitation. Rather, it speaks strongly of this man's involuntary indignity, which, judging by his dirty and calloused feet, is most likely the result of being homeless. It is also possible that he suffers a mental illness. The concerned expressions on the faces of the two women onlookers reinforce these impressions, and also record the shock that this scene presents to the order of daily life. The homeless man's body, analogous to the waste of Japan's ordered modern society, is lit up by the photographer's flash in a way that throws the two onlookers, the countervailing figures of normality, into shadow. On either side are the anonymous and shadowy figures, who, regardless of the reality of the situation, in the context of this image represent the state. The dark uniform of the figure on the right suggests a policeman, while the cargo pants and what

appear to be the gumboots of the man at left, possibly the attire of a nearby worker coming to assist, nonetheless also allegorise the uniform of state enforcer. Like the first Naitō image considered (figure 1), this photograph depicts how crisis occasionally bursts to the surface of modern society, reminding us of the many failures of market capitalism to fulfil the promise of universal prosperity.

When viewing this photograph (figure 5), and others like it in the *Tōkyō* series, we might consider how the image works to capture the premodern as Naitō set out to record in this collection of images. How does this man, in such destitute and humiliating circumstances, represent the archaic? In the first instance, the man and his circumstances symbolise the psychological darkness that Naitō attributes to premodern Japan. This is the putative 'Edo' that existed before the mechanics of civic planning and the mythology of capitalist modernity took hold of twentieth century and particularly postwar Japanese society. In this disturbing scene, Naitō records the despair and chaos lurking beneath the surface of everyday life, a chaos believed to have been eradicated through the meticulous ordering of society and its public spaces. In addition to this connection with a putative past, the marginal status of the man – as that which has been left behind – also signifies the archaic. We are reminded of Benjamin's efforts to expose the destructive capacity and mythological condition of capitalist modernity by paying attention to its marginalia.

Unlike Benjamin, Naitō is not necessarily interested in the frivolities of consumer fashions, but in the detrimental social impact on modern society of the technological developments necessary to feed consumer fetishism. Benjamin's project was largely historical; his unfinished *Arcades Project* was intended as a history of nineteenth century capitalism in Paris, an era he saw as an apotheosis in the trajectory of capitalist mythology. He endeavoured to produce a historical work which was, as Buck-Morss explains, 'a construction of history that looks backward, rather than forward, at the destruction of material nature *as it has actually taken place*' and which, as a consequence, 'provides dialectical contrast to the futurist myth of historical progress (which can only be sustained by

forgetting what has happened).'[237] Naitō, on the other hand, because he documents the present, does not produce a historical work per se. Nonetheless, his focus on social margins holds a similar function to Benjamin's in that it brings to light the mythological thinking behind the assumption of absolute homogeneity, order, and the universality of material benefits in postwar Japan. Where Benjamin gives 'a construction of history that looks backward,' Naitō's work is a construction of the *present* (although of course his 'present' is in fact historical to a contemporary viewer) that is backward looking. Despite the specific differences of both subject matter and temporal emphasis, Naitō, like Benjamin, is interested in depicting in various ways the material circumstances of the margins as a way of undermining prevailing ideas of historical progress. Like Benjamin, for whom modernity's redundant commodities and facades symbolised the unfulfilled promise of modern capitalist mythology, Naitō's homeless subjects represent the subverted desires of those who, like Prime Minister Tanaka, constructed a fantasy of Japanese society as highly ordered and efficient, and of benefit to all.

Naitō's work, however, goes beyond mere documentation of abandonment or distress. In addition to their disruptive presence as signifiers of mythologies both past and present, the figures occupying the dark margins of the photographer's *Tōkyō* images also challenge the modern assumption that happiness and meaning are only available in the lit-up spaces of rationality, order, and consumption. The following image (figure 6) depicts a jovial encounter between photographer and his subject, who is candidly captured going about what is likely to be his daily routine.

[237] Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project*, 95.

Figure 6: "Homeless (Ginza 1970)" from *Tōkyō: Toshi no yami o genshi suru* (*Tokyo, 1970-85: Hallucinating on the Darkness of the City*) by Naitō Masatoshi, 1985.

While the material circumstances of this man are no doubt characterised by deprivation, he seems nonetheless content (in this frozen moment at least). Rather than effacing the figure's sense of subjective identity, in this instance Naitō's flash illuminates a sense of the man's character from an otherwise dark void. In this way the photographer has to some extent created an idealised notion of the premodern amidst the modern, of a more meaningful existence in the shadows of modernity. The bag hanging over the man's shoulder and the plastic container that seems to have been modified as receptacle for collecting hint that the man is in the midst of gathering scrap. The figure of the scrap collector has a long history in writing about the modern urban space. Charles Baudelaire, in particular, wrote admiringly of the ragpicker, the early modern equivalent of the scrap collector. For Baudelaire, the ragpicker repurposed and thus overturned the redundant value of waste material. In this way, the figure brought some sense of redemption to the sheer volume of cast-off material

produced by industrial modernity.[238] Benjamin, whose conception of the ragpicker was influenced by Baudelaire's, noted that the 'ragpicker is the most provocative figure of human poverty.'[239] This is because, as Gilloch observes, he or she is a 'social outcast who derives his or her precarious subsistence precisely from that which is cast out.'[240] In this, the ragpicker/scrap collector defies the logic of modernity by making valuable what has been deemed devoid of the same: 'He or she is an urban "archaeologist" who unearths the old-fashioned commodities that in turn reveal the truth about new ones, namely, that they are the same old rubbish.'[241]

This challenge to modern social norms, alongside the shock engendered by her or his destitute appearance and circumstances, has made the ragpicker a figure of disdain for many in modern societies. This has equally been the case in Japan. Taira Koji notes, for example, that amongst the homeless people in Tokyo ragpicking has been the 'least preferred form of gainful employment,' so much so that 'many of the poor would rather beg or steal than pick rags' and thus we might consider it to be 'on the borderline between employment and vagrancy.'[242] The lowliness of this kind of employment, as well as the perceived personality flaws of those undertaking these tasks, flaws which are deemed to have contributed to their plight, has meant that 'the contempt of the general public for ragpickers has always been deep.'[243] Taira observes, however, that in one instance a community of Tokyo ragpickers, known as 'the Ants' Villa,' overcame this contempt to thrive in the margins, transforming itself from a collective 'verging… upon the underworld of vagrants and criminals' into a 'clean, quiet, and prosperous' community.[244] From 1950 until 1960, this community of ragpickers grew to a total of around 150 people situated in 90 households. In this way, Ants' Villa members defied their categorical status of redundancy, as refuse

[238] Charles Baudelaire, *On Wine and Hashish*, trans. Andrew Brown (London: 100 Pages, 2002), 8.
[239] Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 349-50.; J68, 4
[240] Gilloch, *Myth and Metropolis: Walter Benjamin and the City*, 165.
[241] Ibid.
[242] Koji Taira, "Urban Poverty, Ragpickers, and the "Ants' Villa" in Tokyo," *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 17, no. 2 (1969): 163.
[243] Ibid., 168.
[244] Ibid.

in a metaphorical sense, but also literally as excess labour. More provocatively, as Benjamin observed, the act of subsistence by repurposing industrial modernity's refuse presents an ontological challenge to its teleological narrative in which the new must necessarily surpass the old.

Working in the decade after Taira produced his account of the Ants' Villa community, Naitō's images of Tokyo's marginalised poor do not necessarily reveal a sense of community on that scale. This is partly attributable to his method of isolating small scenes rather than working across a broader range, but more specifically because of the way in which the ambiguous sense of the premodern that he invokes also encompasses violence and catastrophe. Nonetheless, there are small instances in which his photographs point to meaningful life at the margins. The following image (figure 7) is one that gives some sense of community in Tokyo's dark marginal spaces.

Figure 7: "The mother of Tsuburaya and Maya-chan (Shinbashi 1977)" from *Tōkyō: Toshi no yami o genshi suru* (*Tokyo, 1970-85: Hallucinating on the Darkness of the City*) by Naitō Masatoshi, 1985.

This sense of the communal is perhaps most directly reflected in the gesture of the man at right, who appears to carry out some kind of personal grooming for the woman. It is also a function of the way in which spatial depth has been removed, so that each figure seems to have equal presence in relation to the camera. Certainly, the man at left seems to be dissolving into the blackness that surrounds him. Yet, this does not undermine a sense of accord that links the three figures. Rather, the manner in which the darkness overtakes his body underlines his marginal status, the pressure that life on the social margins applies to his sense of self. In contrast to the comparatively upbeat example of the Ants' villa, and that of the previous image (figure 6), the community depicted here is more suggestive of common ground found in the face of adversity and hardship. This impression is conveyed by the sombre expression on the woman's face, in the gritty texture of the image, and the prevalence of black in the frame.

While Naitō often constructs his depictions of Tokyo's marginalised in terms of the overt provocation that their destitution presents to the comfortable existence of the mainstream, the above two images (figures 6 and 7) demonstrate that he also at times seeks to undermine the logic of consumption as the only possible form of human existence that drives society. Furthermore, in those images in which he does present the figure of the homeless person of Tokyo as provocateur, Naitō does not necessarily seek to emphasise the disparity between the centre and its margins. As we have seen, his images collapse linear narratives of past and present, emphasising the persistence of the archaic amidst the putative new of modernity. This is proper to Benjamin's idea of the dialectical image, a perspective of history that was not simply a way of undermining modernity, but contained within it the possibility of redemption from the violent and catastrophic forward progression of modern society. The tragedy of this ceaseless progress is reflected in the following evocative passage, which references *Angelus Novus*, the famous monoprint by Paul Klee:

> This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet.

> The angel would like to say, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress.[245]

This 'angel of history' implores us to pay attention to the growing debris produced by modernity so that we might recognise its redemptive presence. As the passage observes, the recognition of the past 'flashes up at a moment of danger,'[246] as it has in several of Naitō's images discussed thus far. Further, this recognition is a sign of redemption, for 'only a redeemed mankind receives the fullness of its past.'[247] As Willem Schinkel observes, for Benjamin this redeemed society is characterised by 'a non-conformist and non-mythical conception of life and of history, and of a classless society.'[248]

While it is unclear whether or not Naitō shared Benjamin's faith in a socialist community as an alternative to capitalist modernity, he certainly held a similar view of the potentially redemptive powers of the past. This belief is evidenced by his lifelong interest in Japan's indigenous traditions, and, as we have seen, resonates throughout the *Tōkyō* book in a variety of ways. The following image (figure 8) depicts a seemingly harmonious constellation of the marginal/past and the centre/present of modern Tokyo.

[245] Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 2007), 259.
[246] Ibid., 255.
[247] Ibid., 254.
[248] Willem Schinkel, "The Image of Crisis: Walter Benjamin and the Interpretation of 'Crisis' in Modernity," *Thesis Eleven* 127, no. 1 (2015): 42.

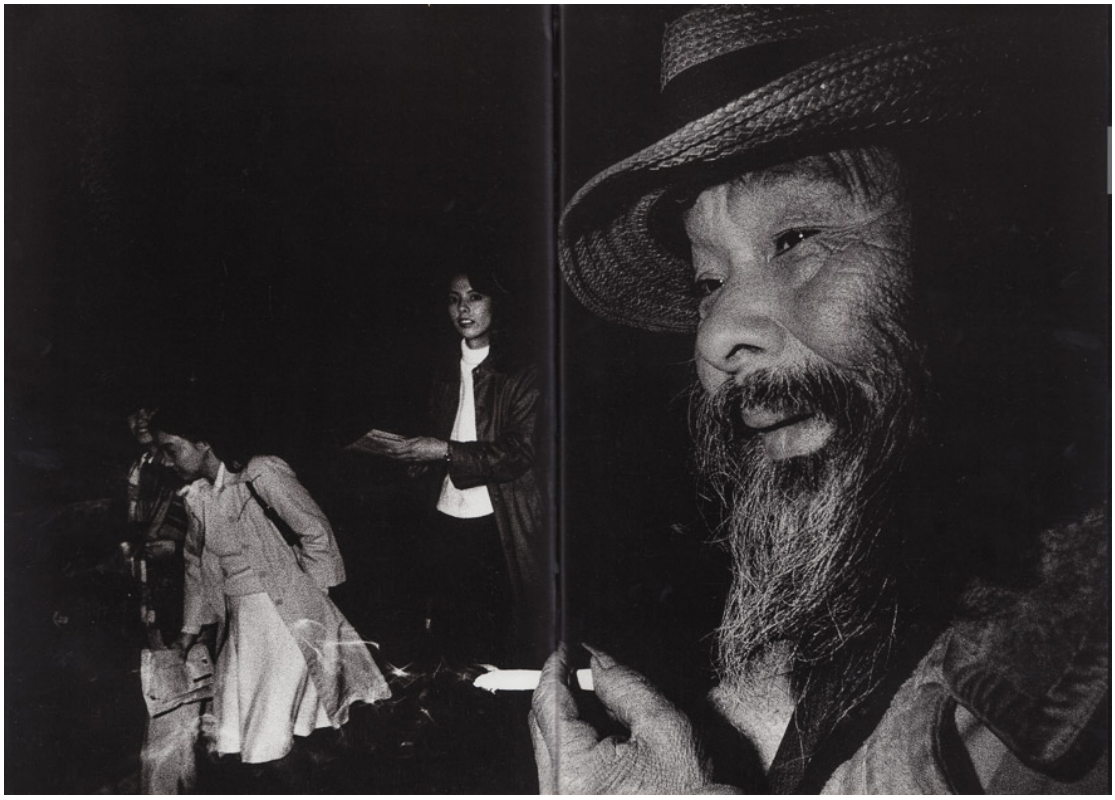

Figure 8: "Homeless man smoking cigarette (Kyobashi 1981)" from *Tōkyō: Toshi no yami o genshi suru* (*Tokyo, 1970-85: Hallucinating on the Darkness of the City*) by Naitō Masatoshi, 1985.

Like the others discussed in this chapter, the eliding of spatial depth within the image shakes the subjects free of the anchoring narrative of linear perspective. The result is a reduction of a sense of social stratification and the consequent creation of a feeling of shared positive experience, very much suggested here in the contented expression of the man on the right, who is the key figure in the image, and two of the women at left. While the woman in the centre middle-ground does not similarly smile, she does engage the photographer with a look that is unperturbed either by the presence of the homeless man or being made part of this picture. As opposed to the provocative presence of, for example, the figure with his buttocks exposed, the beard, aged face, and friendly expression of the man pictured here suggests the redemptive presence of a jovial figure from folklore, a being with knowledge of the old. The result is one of shared humanity that emphasises the distinctive value of each of the women – who are representatives of the modern centre – and the 'premodern' man. Moreover, the gaze of the woman in the centre of the image draws both the photographer and therefore the viewer into this constellation, collapsing the distance between

observer and observed, viewer and subject. In this, the image embodies Benjamin's most utopian aspirations for the dialectical image, collapsing boundaries of time and space, suggesting the potentialities of a non-linear experience of time.

Conclusion

Through the aesthetic motifs of dark and light, Naitō's *Tōkyō* series depicts a keen sense of catastrophe in the Tokyo of the 1970s and 80s. At its most fundamental, this catastrophe is reflected in the tensions between, on the one hand, a universalising modernity propelled by the mythology of progress and, on the other, a particularistic identity anchored in a time before that modern cosmology had taken hold of Japanese society. Naitō's images do not, however, merely present an idealised and static idea of a past that for better or worse had been transcended by the modern epoch. Rather, he documents the persistence of the premodern in Tokyo's dark marginal spaces in a manner that undermines comfortable notions of order and progress. Further, by lighting up Tokyo's dark spaces, Naitō exposes what Benjamin described as the wreckage of modernity, the increasing debris that accumulates in the wake of modernity's incessant forward push. In addition to the material reality of industrial wreckage, Naitō's images also expose the human wreckage of the modern. His photographs bring our attention to the marginal figures of Tokyo, shocking us by recording the destitute circumstances of those at the periphery, but also reminding us of the provocation these figures make to the modern centre. By viewing Naitō's work, viewers are reminded of the persistence of the archaic in the modern, a presence that reveals the aporias of modern cosmology while nonetheless confirming the possibility of redemption. These complex photographic representations uniquely echo the critique of modernity offered by Benjamin's dialectical image in the depiction of the precarious ambiguity at the heart of urban modernity in postwar Japan.

CHAPTER FOUR:

Imaging the Rural: Modernity and Agrarianism in Hamaya Hiroshi's *Yukiguni* Photographs

Introduction

The *Yukiguni* (*Snow Country*) monograph, perhaps the best known work by the photographer Hamaya Hiroshi (1915–1999), portrays rural life in Japan's snowy northern regions during the 1940s and 50s. In this sense, its inclusion here presents a thematic shift in the thesis from the urban spaces of the three previous chapters to consideration in the chapters that follow of photographic depictions of rural and traditional life. Despite this difference, however, the *Yukiguni* images express similar notions to those discussed thus far, most notably dissatisfaction with modernity and the associated issues of identity. There is an echo of wartime discourse in *Yukiguni* that links Hamaya's work to that of Hayashi (chapter one), a perhaps unsurprising connection given that there is some temporal overlap between the two projects. Hamaya commenced photographing the *Yukiguni* series in 1940, completing the project ten years later. The photographs in the book, which was first published in 1956, were therefore each taken either during wartime or in the acute period of postwar recovery that was also captured in Hayashi's images (chapter one). *Yukiguni* has links with the work of Takanashi (chapter two) and Naitō (chapter three) through the sense of disillusionment felt by each with the state of modern Japan. While Takanashi and Naitō chose to tackle this head on through critiquing the space of the city, Hamaya seeks a rejuvenated sense of meaning in the traditions and rhythms of rural life. Although this turn to the past recalls Naitō's *Tokyo* images, Hamaya's photography does not here suggest the coeval existence of present and past. Rather, *Yukiguni* depicts a rural space that seems hermetically sealed from the seemingly external travails of mid-century Japanese modernity. The photographs contain no visible traces of either the traumas of war or postwar reconstruction.

By omitting these traces, Hamaya depicts Japan's snowy rural spaces as an indirect critique of 1940s and 1950s Japanese society. In doing so, the photographer offers up the rural existence as an idealised model of a meaningful existence than is beyond the reach of those who dwell in urban spaces. In this way, the project is underpinned by a sense of disillusionment caused not only by the hollowing out of daily life often regarded as a universal experience of modernity, but also (as teased out in the latter part of this chapter) with the failed promises of the fascist wartime state. On one level, therefore, we might simply dismiss the project as exemplifying, to use Raymond Williams' phrase, the simplistic and 'well-known habit of using the past, the "good old days," as a stick to beat the present.'[249] The analysis in this chapter will demonstrate, however, that more than this the manner in which nostalgic representations of rural life in *Yukiguni* elide historical contingencies reveals how the photographer was deeply entrenched in a particularly modern way of seeing the world as a preformed picture. In this sense, the images featured in the book reflect not so much the material realities photographed as an idealised notion of the rural space. In idealising this space, Hamaya draws on a worldview that objectifies the natural landscape as an already posited conceptual space available for observation and recording by the modern subject.

Hamaya was born and educated in a working class area of Tokyo and taught himself photography in adolescence before briefly undertaking formal studies in the medium. In the urban spaces of that city, he almost certainly encountered the strains of modernism that were permeating Japan's cosmopolitan capital in the interwar years. In his first professional position Hamaya was tutored by Yoshio Watanabe (1907–2000), one of Japan's most revered photographers. [1] Hamaya had early associations with the surrealists of the 1930s.[250] In the postwar era, moreover, he encountered a type of universalising humanism that emanated from America and became influential around the globe. This association with humanist ideas led to the 1960 invitation that was extended to

[249] Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (London: Chatto & Windus Ltd, 1973), 12.
[250] John Clark, "Hamaya Hiroshi (1915-1999) and Photographic Modernism in Japan," *Trans-Asia Photography Review* 7, no. 1 (2016).

Hamaya to join *Magnum*, the prestigious American photo agency. He was the first Japanese person to become a member of this agency, an event which even today is considered a benchmark of global success for documentary photographers.[251] *Magnum* became synonymous with a movement in postwar photography that sought to collapse cultural differences by emphasising the universal sameness of human experience. Hamaya's involvement with *Magnum* also indicates that he was by then one of Japan's most internationally celebrated photographers, as did the inclusion of his work into an international exhibition that was the most iconic iteration of postwar photographic humanism, *The Family of Man* (referenced in chapter two). Hamaya went on to become one of Japan's most celebrated photographers. In 1958 he received the Japan Photographic Society's annual award and in 1981 the Japan Art Grand Prix. Other international awards included the 1986 Master of Photography award from the International Centre of Photography and the 1987 International Photography Prize from Sweden's Hasselblad Foundation. Hamaya received honorary membership of the Royal Photographic Society of England in the same year.

Yukiguni is not simply a product of universalising discourses, but is also defined by discourses specific to 1940s and 1950s Japan. In his representation of the countryside as culturally iconic, Hamaya channels a particular set of Japanese discourses of nostalgia for a pastoral golden age. In the wartime context, agrarianism discourses of this nature served state ideology and were intended to unite the people and thus ensure an enthusiastic mass response to state imperatives. When considering the *Yukiguni* images, the inherent contradiction between discourses of modernity, which valorised central technologies, and agrarian discourse, which valorised an ahistorical understanding of the countryside, becomes acutely apparent. In order to fuel progress, the modern centre must consume its rural periphery both in a material and ideological sense. As a product of Japan's urban centre, Hamaya was unable to recognise this dilemma, instead perceiving the snow country space according to the worldview of a modern individual. The photographic representations that he created offer the pastoral landscape as a peripheral and objectified space. This space is

[251] Orto, "Hamaya Hiroshi," 340.

produced by those in urban centres as a salve for the crises of meaning and identity in modern life. Yet, the complexities of photographic representation ensure that the images point us towards meanings and implications beyond the apparent intentions of the photographer. Despite the seemingly straightforward documentary aesthetic of many of Hamaya's images, the result is an ambiguous depiction that displays neither modern objectivity nor subjective romanticism, but something in between. This ambiguity is a product of the tension between the photographer's intention to document and his emotional response to the snow country space.

Pre-picturing Snow Country

In his essay, *The Age of the World Picture,*[252] Martin Heidegger defines modernity as the age in which representation becomes the principal means for humankind to understand the world. In modernity, the world becomes a rationalised object organised and explained according to multifarious and entwined scientific schemata. In this way, fundamental notions of the world are constituted in accordance with the centralised standpoint of humankind. The modern age, in other words, understands the world as a picture, an already posited image. This worldview contrasts with the Middle Ages, for example, at which time the world was understood according to divine creation. During that period, 'to be in being' meant 'to belong within a specific rank of the order of what has been created.'[253] Heidegger argues that although the world as a preconceived image is ontologically constituted through a variety of representational forms, the most pervasive are the sciences, all of which are grounded in research. Thus it is principally through research that the world is made to stand before humanity in the modern age.[254] One such science that informs the world-as-picture in modernity is ethnography, a discipline that is heavily reliant on documentation and data collection. Ethnographic documentation was a central imperative for

[252] This essay first appeared in a German-language publication of Heidegger's essays entitled *Holzwege* (1952). The first English translation, to which this discussion refers, was first published as part of a collection of Heidegger's essays entitled *The Question Concerning Technology* (1977).
[253] Martin Heidegger, "The Age of the World Picture," in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 130.
[254] Ibid., 118.

Hamaya's photographic expeditions into the rural snow country spaces of Niigata Prefecture.

Hamaya's *Yukiguni* can be seen as both creative work and ethnographic research. While the series contains many dynamic and expressively composed images, the book is also a carefully edited and organised documentation of 'the depth and richness of a spiritual life' in villages of Niigata 'with a long history behind it'.[255] This was a way of living considered to be both exceptional and endangered by ethnographers of the time such as Ichikawa Shinji (1901–1982) and Shibusawa Keizō (1896–1963). Hamaya met Ichikawa in Takada, a snow country town where the former was employed to photograph Japanese military training exercises. Ichikawa introduced Hamaya to Shibusawa, a wealthy amateur who, with Ichikawa, persuaded Hamaya of the scholarly importance of using his camera to document Niigata snow country life.[256]

As an ethnographic work, *Yukiguni* is very much in line with Heidegger's account of scientific research. Heidegger defines research as the enactment of procedures bound to a 'ground plan' that is conceived in advance and which subsequently guides these procedures.[257] In Hamaya's case, the preconceived 'ground plan' is an idea of socio-historical development that positions the rural and the urban according to a teleological schema. Hamaya's 'procedure' is the rigorous production of images that are captured and arranged in a way that positions the snow country and its people as archaic. In this sense, *Yukiguni* is also a historiographical work – Hamaya, a modern urban subject, essentially sought to capture a way of life that he perceived as a 'primitive' remnant of a past 'Japan.'[258] This connects the photographer with a long genealogy of Western anthropologists and ethnographers who documented other cultures as part of

[255] Hiroshi Hamaya, *Yukiguni* (Tokyo: Asahi Sonorama, 1977), n.p.g.
[256] Jonathon M. Reynolds, "Hiroshi Hamaya's Snow Country: A Return to "Japan"," in *Japan's Modern Divide: The Photographs of Hiroshi Hamaya and Kansuke Yamamoto*, ed. Judith Keller and Amanda Maddox (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2013), 20.
[257] Heidegger, "The Age of the World Picture," 118.
[258] Hiroshi Hamaya, *Senzōzanzō: Shashinka No Taikenteki Kaisō* [*Latent Image and Afterglow: A Photographer's Experiential Recollection*] (Tokyo: Kawadeshobōshinsha, 1971), 35.

research into the historical development of humankind. According to anthropologist Johannes Fabian, a fixation on human development often blinded anthropologists to the contemporaneousness of their research subjects. The human subjects of research were objectified as living relics and thus inferior iterations of humanity in comparison to the modern researcher.[259] Like these early ethnographers, Hamaya attempts to capture a disappearing culture. However, where anthropologists depicted their subjects as inferior, Hamaya valorised Japan's snow country as the site of an ideal lifestyle.

According to Heidegger, it is no accident that in the modern age research is fundamentally anthropocentric. He argues that 'the more effectually the world stands at man's disposal as conquered', that is, as possessed through knowledge, the more persistently the world is understood from an orientation that centralises humanity.[260] Consequently, 'observation of and teaching about the world' increasingly becomes 'a doctrine of man.'[261] Humanism, therefore, 'first arises where the world becomes picture.'[262] The study of humankind was of central concern for Hamaya who noted that throughout his career: 'what captured and held my interest as a photographer were people and their problems. My work…began with the main object: man.'[263] On an international level, Hamaya's photography became linked to a mode of humanism prevalent in the early postwar era that arose to counter the nationalism held responsible for the outbreak of both World Wars. Blake Stimson notes how, in the decade following World War Two, public intellectuals such as Franz Fanon and Jean-Paul Sartre advocated a concept of identity that transcended cultural and national boundaries. Rather than the nation-state, or even a United Nations, 'what was desperately needed', according to these thinkers, 'was a world community integrated organically, morally, and politically through the development of a new idée-force that gave form to new thoughts and new sentiments in the figure of a

[259] Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 25-35.
[260] Heidegger, "The Age of the World Picture," 133.
[261] Ibid.
[262] Ibid.
[263] Hamaya, *Senzōzanzō: Shashinka No Taikenteki Kaisō* [*Latent Image and Afterglow: A Photographer's Experiential Recollection*], 214.

postmodern, postnationalist citizen of the world.'[264] Stimson goes on to argue that, largely because of a general belief that the photograph was an unbiased and democratic mode of representation, photography was seen as an integral medium for this new concept of global identity. Photography, it was claimed, could provide a new 'sense of belonging…distinct from race, language, region, and other national markers, and distinct from that of the transcultural marketplace.'[265]

Hamaya's links to this broader global movement are evident from the fact that his work featured in the 1955 *The Family of Man* exhibition, curated by Edward Steichen (1879–1973), director of photography at the prestigious New York Museum of Modern Art. Evaluating the exhibition here will help to compare Hamaya's *Yukiguni* with the particular kind of representation found in *The Family of Man*. Steichen's exhibition toured internationally for eight years, attracting around 9 million viewers and embodying the photographic apex of postwar universal humanism. The exhibition was a large collection of images taken throughout the world by various photographers and grouped under universal themes including birth, death, and work. In Steichen's own words, it was designed to present 'a mirror of the essential oneness of mankind' and to communicate a 'basic human consciousness rather than social consciousness'.[266] The following image (figure 1) from the exhibition catalogue provides a sense of the universal humanity depicted.

[264] Stimson, *The Pivot of the World: Photography and Its Nation*, 15.
[265] Ibid., 20.
[266] Edward Steichen, *The Family of Man* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1955), 4.

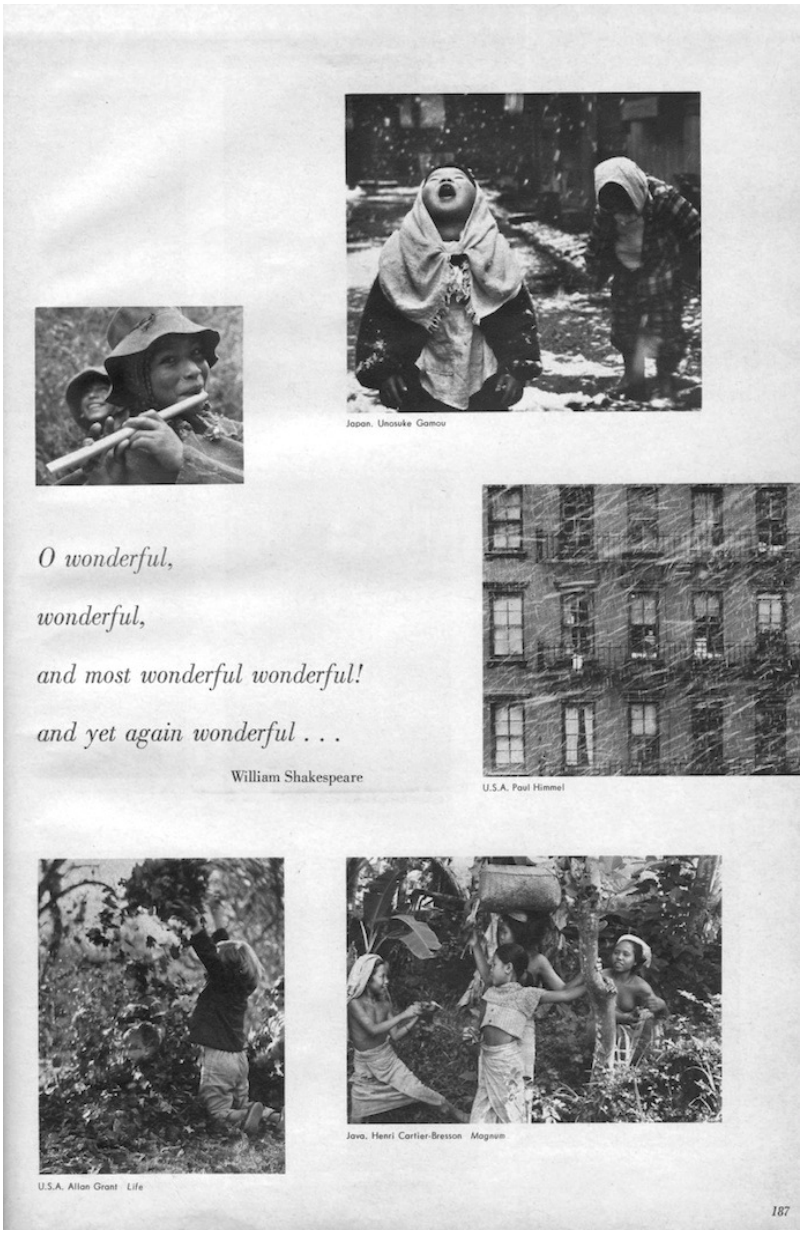

Figure 1: Page 187 from *The Family of Man*, by Edward Steichen (ed.), 1955.

Despite laudable intentions of countering a resurgence of the divisive nationalism that brought on two World Wars, Stimson acknowledged that the exhibition was a 'hopeless attempt to reconcile universal with particular', in which 'political vision was understood to appeal directly to something universally human and primordial'.[267] Roland Barthes describes this type of humanism as a 'very old mystification' founded upon the belief that 'in scratching the history of men a little, the relativity of their institutions or the superficial

[267] Stimson, *The Pivot of the World: Photography and Its Nation*, 11.

diversity of their skins…one very quickly reaches the solid rock of human nature'.[268]

Notwithstanding these problems, there were undoubtedly good intentions behind this effort to diffuse cultural conflict by downplaying cultural differences. The difficulty, however, was that the resultant universalism inevitably ignored both the distinctive historical particularities of given cultures, as well as real injustices. The exclusion of the latter was especially problematic given that some of the images were created during wartime. Barthes argued that ultimately *The Family of Man*:

> …suppress[ed] the determining weight of History: we are held back at the surface of an identity, prevented precisely by sentimentality from penetrating into this ulterior zone of human behaviour where historical alienation introduces some 'differences' which we shall here quite simply call injustices.[269]

Hamaya's representation of the snow country often precisely exhibits the type of sentimentality critiqued here by Barthes. Specifically, the landscape and its inhabitants are depicted as symbolising communal harmony and hardy self-sufficiency. A 'surface' Japanese identity is produced in the book that obscures the tensions that beset any community, including those associated with class and gender relations.

Hamaya's *Yukiguni*, however, differs from *The Family of Man* in the important sense that, rather than promoting an ideal of transnational unity, the photographer sought to depict a culturally specific notion of Japanese identity. Yet resonances with Steichen's exhibition remain in his work: Hamaya's photographic series posits a sentimental and unifying ideal of 'authenticity' for Japanese society that not only ignores the particular influences of history, place, and culture in the rural landscape but also elides a sense of cultural diversity within Japan. In this sense, both photographic projects symbolise a modern

[268] Roland Barthes, "The Great Family of Man," in *Mythologies*, ed. Annette Lavers (London: Vintage, 2009), 122.
[269] Ibid.

worldview that renders the world as picture. Despite aspirations towards objectivity, each constitutes the world as a subjective representation of a universalised sense of being that overwrites particular cultural contingencies.

The World as Exhibition: Hamaya's *Yukiguni* as Modernity's Mirror

The sentimental representation of the snow country in Hamaya's photographic series clearly reflects a modern mode of subjectivity through its emotive appeal to a unified sense of Japanese identity. This representation signifies the extent to which Hamaya was at that time embedded within modern systems of knowledge production. In modernity, the physical landscape becomes ontologically peripheral to the human subject, and the rural landscape in particular is conceived of as exterior to the modern centre. This distanced space is produced in various differing ways that include both the sentimentality discussed above and scientific modes of representation. A scientific approach is particularly evident in *Yukiguni* in that many images in the collection display a clear attempt by the photographer to objectively document his subject. This reflects the influence of his encounter with ethnographer Ichikawa, who inspired Hamaya's documentation of village rituals in the Kuwadori Valley through immersive fieldwork which required him to 'walk, observe, and feel.'[270] In his efforts to represent the snow country space as objective fact through observation, Hamaya also responded to his feelings by positing an imagined space that grounded his sense of identity both as a modern individual and as a Japanese person. In this sense, the photo series produces the kind of imaginary site that Foucault entitles a 'heterotopia': an externalised utopic space anchored to multiple physical locations. Heterotopia simultaneously affirms identity and calls it into question.[271] In Hamaya's representation, the snow country is experienced as modern society's peripheral opposite, the pre-modernity of its modernity. In a moment of *différance*, to use Jacques Derrida's term, the qualitative meaning of modern existence is confirmed by the positing of its opposite, but at the same

[270] Hamaya, *Senzōzanzō: Shashinka No Taikenteki Kaisō* [*Latent Image and Afterglow: A Photographer's Experiential Recollection*], 36.
[271] Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (1986): 24.

time undermined by a longing towards a seemingly superior utopic rural space.[272]

One example of these 'objective' representations of modernity's external spaces and identity that is particularly relevant to this discussion of Hamaya's *Yukiguni* is found in colonial knowledge production. The space presented in *Yukiguni* is reminiscent of a particular way of viewing the Middle East and Asia that was characteristic of nineteenth century Europe. Using the example of world exhibitions held in Europe during the late 1800s (and drawing on the same Heidegger essay discussed above), Timothy Mitchell relates how, in a literal sense, Europeans constructed the Orient in a series of exhibits that recreated actual geographical spaces, such as a busy street in Cairo, which could be 'viewed, investigated, and experienced.'[273] In these exhibitions, the representation of the world-as-picture took a three dimensional form. The Cairo street was reproduced as a life-size diorama, a generic experience of the Orient created for exhibition visitors. Mitchell's example demonstrates one of the ways in which European nations scientifically 'observed' alien spaces in the colonial era that they then judged as retrograde in order to affirm Europe as superior in relation to its opposite, the Orient.[274]

Hamaya's documentary photographs of the snow country are clearly not constructed in the manner of a museum exhibit, nor are they an exercise in colonial discursive power. Nonetheless, like European exhibits of the Orient, *Yukiguni* constructs an experience of life in Japan's remote mountain villages, a singular representative space that combines various geographic locations. Hamaya produces this effect through a range of narrative devices. The image below (figure 2), for example, is an overview shot that commences one section of the book.

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[272] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 23.
[273] Timothy Mitchell, "The World as Exhibition," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31, no. 2 (1989): 220.
[274] This way of seeing and representing the Orient by the West is most famously explicated by Edward Said in his book *Orientalism*. See in particular his concept of 'imaginative geographies' (Said 2003, 49-73).

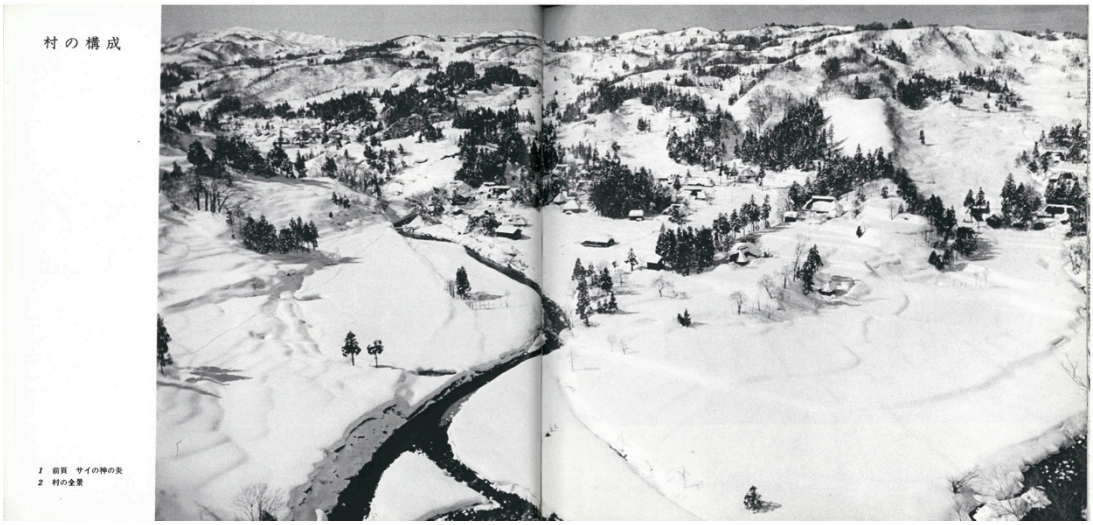

Figure 2: "Full view of the village" from *Yukiguni* (*Snow Country*) by Hamaya Hiroshi, 1977, (1956).

The photograph resembles a diorama such as one might encounter in a museum, an impression that is attributable to both the high angle from which the image has been taken and the distance perspective, which positions the viewer so that the landscape seems to be a miniaturised version of itself. As a result, the land is spread before the viewer as a stage upon which the ensuing photographic narrative will take place. Adding to this distancing of viewer from subject is the manner in which the various lines and shapes in the landscape are carefully balanced to give the impression of a mapped space. The majority of images in the book depict people undertaking preparations for traditional New Year celebrations, with landscapes such as this relatively rare. This image, however, presents as a kind of 'ground plan' (to use Heidegger's term)[275] for a more detailed documentation, establishing a macro perspective to contextualise the images taken from a much closer vantage point of the village rituals and human subjects that follow.

Suggesting an objective display that is external yet knowable to the viewer, the photograph above (figure 2) begins a section of the book that focuses entirely on New Year celebrations and is structured as a narrative through chronological sequencing of images and montage. Given the book's intention as an ethnographic work, it is not surprising to see these techniques being utilised in

[275] Heidegger, "The Age of the World Picture," 118.

order to structure the viewer's experience. Chronological order, in particular, organises the various rituals and ceremonies conducted by the villagers, giving the impression of the same sort of meticulously produced spectacle as the exhibitions referred to above. Below (figures 3 and 4) are two images taken from a sequence that depicts a villager performing the *wakagi mukae* ritual.[276]

Figure 3: "Walking towards Aki" from *Yukiguni* (*Snow Country*) by Hamaya Hiroshi, 1977, (1956).

[276] The *wakagi mukae* ritual involves the cutting of a young tree in order to use it as an ornament in Japanese new-year festivities.

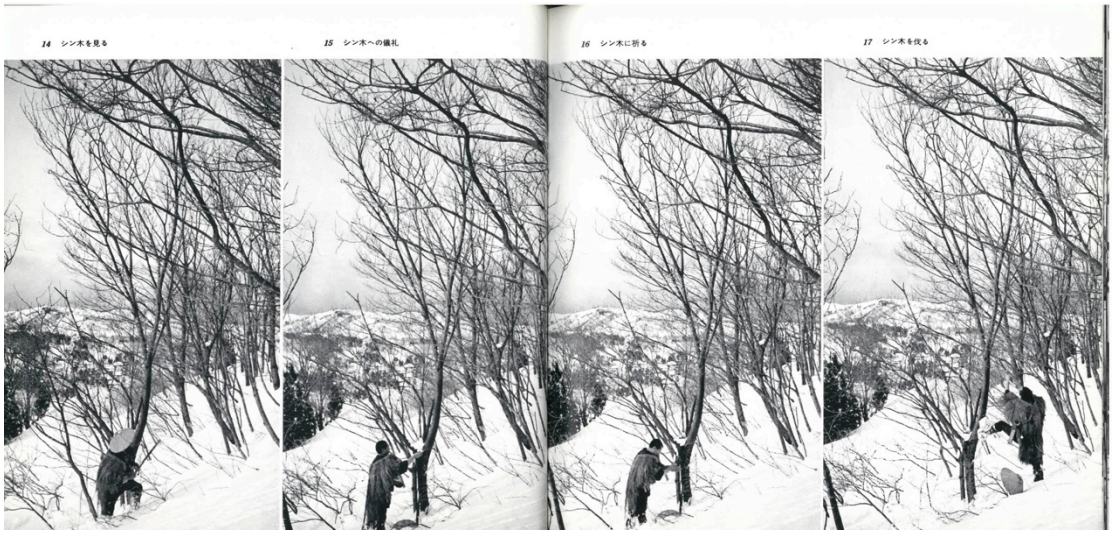

Figure 4: “Gazing at the new tree”; “Paying courtesy to the new tree”; “Praying to the new tree”; “Cutting the new tree” from *Yukiguni* (*Snow Country*) by Hamaya Hiroshi, 1977, (1956).

The sequence begins with an intimately close portrait of a man (figure 3), after which the perspective shifts back to that of the viewer of an objective document (figure 4). This latter example reflects Hamaya’s self-assigned role as documenter, an effect that is achieved in three ways. First, the photographer has withdrawn to a distance so as not to disturb what is unfolding before him. Second, the chronological sequencing creates a temporal narrative that reflects the photographer’s wish to distance himself as narrator. Third, the absence of dramatic angles or other expressive framing techniques produces an objective aesthetic. The combined effect is that of a ‘factual’ representation of the snow country space (much like the display of the Cairo street). Here, the ritual is carefully delineated and organised according to the rationalising logic of temporal sequencing. The space is presented to the viewer as an item of objective information that can be incorporated into the broader world picture of modernity.

The objective approach employed in the sequence differs markedly from the photographic strategy used to convey the image of the man that precedes it (figure 3), which takes a more subjective representative approach. In contrast to the static segmentation of time in figure 4, figure 3 suggests action, as the man seems to prepare himself to perform the ritual ahead. Similarly opposed is the

proximity and angle of the shot: the close distance between photographer and subject producing a sense of intimacy, an impression that is augmented by the high camera angle that allows us to make out the smallest details of his attire. The man, perhaps conversing with a fellow villager, looks to something or someone in front of him and outside the frame. Taken in combination, these aspects of the image provide an intimate and emotive portrayal of the man who seems hardy, yet almost regal. This latter impression is created by the way in which his body fills the frame, his balanced pose, and the physical bulk of his traditional clothing. The clothing itself adds to the man's almost magisterial air, particularly through the wide shoulder covering – seemingly a practical garment providing protection from snow – which adds to the figure's impressive stature. These garments, painstakingly constructed by hand from natural fibres to a design necessitated by the harsh snow country elements, also suggest a visceral and tactile connection to nature that is alien to the modern urban subject. A longing for this type of connection on the part of Hamaya is an underlying thread in this photo series, and is particularly apparent in this idealised portrayal. Contrasting this method to the scientific approach employed in figure 4, we can clearly see the ambiguous confluence of a supposedly distanced and objective interpretation with an emotionally driven romanticisation of the snow country that characterises the *Yukiguni* photo series. Each mode of representation in its own way nonetheless objectifies the rural landscape, producing an impression of this region that reflects the viewpoint of the modern subject.

Fantasising the Past-present: Nostalgia and the Countryside

The *Yukiguni* images discussed thus far demonstrate how the rural landscape is produced as a space peripheral to modernity's centre through rationalising logic. One consequence of this is that, according to the developmental logic of modernity, rural landscapes are often represented as a retrograde past whose inhabitants are less civilised than those who dwell in an urban space.[277] Such logic contradictorily engenders nostalgia for an ideal lifestyle deemed lost. The following discussion looks at the particular way nostalgia for the pastoral in Japan features alongside attempts at pure documentation in Hamaya's *Yukiguni.*

[277] Williams, *The Country and the City*, 1.

It is important to note that idealisation of the countryside is not unique to the modern age nor to Japan. Raymond Williams, for example, has demonstrated how nostalgia for pastoral life and fear for its extinction can be traced to antiquity. In his example of modern writings about the English countryside, Williams observes a general shift beginning during the Renaissance whereby 'the landscape becomes more distant, becomes in fact Arcadia, and the Golden Age is seen as present there.'[278] As Britain became increasingly industrial and urban, recognition of the hardships of rural life present in earlier works began to disappear: 'step by step, these living tensions are excised, until there is nothing countervailing, and selected images stand as themselves: not in a living but in an enamelled world.'[279] This tendency to render the pastoral as a symbol detached from material and historical contingencies reflects a new way to produce meaning in the face of modernity's increased rationalisation of daily life.

With the rapid development of the Meiji era (1868-1912), many in Japan experienced not only economic and social upheaval, but also an existential crisis. This sense of dislocation became even more pronounced in the Taishō era. Alan Tansman articulates this phenomenon as it operated in the prewar era:

> …a time of 'blankness' lacking former myths and other objects of unselfconscious worship. Lost are previous forms of sociability and the rituals binding them, artistic forms sanctioned by tradition, and a sense of continuous time stretching back into the past and promising to continue without interruption into the future.[280]

In the face of modern logic, as Harry Harootunian notes, the legitimacy of old forms of knowledge and meaning became 'a receding echo', retreating 'steadily

[278] Ibid., 16-17.
[279] Ibid., 18.
[280] Alan Tansman, *The Aesthetics of Japanese Fascism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 8.

into a remaindered world of irrationality and ghosts.'[281] Stefan Tanaka argues that this distancing of traditional from modern knowledge, and subsequently a distancing of humankind from the natural world, is symbolised in the Meiji-era replacement of the indigenous lunar calendar with the foreign solar (Gregorian) calendar. This new calendar was at odds with the timing of traditional events such as festivals and ceremonies, so that the experience of time in everyday life became disconnected from traditional practice. Daily life was now organised around the logic of the solar calendar, and events that had punctuated the old lunar calendar were displaced and became illogical within the new organisational context of modern time. As a result, Tanaka argues, 'what had constituted experience and common sense…[was] now evidence of a lack of understanding and reason, immaturity, or childhood.'[282] Thus, the imposition of the solar calendar by the Meiji regime had the effect of condemning 'the very organisation of people's lives' as 'evil customs of the past'.[283]

It is clear that Hamaya himself keenly felt that something important had been lost in modern Japanese society. It was therefore important for him to record and evaluate these traditional systems of knowledge.[284] Hamaya also saw the snow country as holding the promise of a collective identity he felt to be slipping away in the face of modern individualism. He has likened his many field trips to the Niigata rural space during the creation of *Yukiguni* as 'my return to [the nation of] Japan.'[285] This idea of an authentic Japan found in the snow country emphasises old systems of knowledge, most notably religious practice, as a source of meaning and the virtues of close human relations that arise through shared activities. In the essay that accompanies the *Yukiguni* images, Hamaya emphasises the importance of religion for both unity and resilience: 'The farmers who built up the narrow, infertile and poor Japanese islands into a fertile land

[281] Harry Harootunian, "Constitutive Ambiguities: The Persistence of Modernism and Fascism in Japan's Modern History," in *The Culture of Japanese Fascism*, ed. Alan Tansman (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2009), 83.
[282] Stefan Tanaka, *New Times in Modern Japan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 82.
[283] Ibid., 9.
[284] Hamaya, *Senzōzanzō: Shashinka No Taikenteki Kaisō* [*Latent Image and Afterglow: A Photographer's Experiential Recollection*], 152.
[285] Ibid., 38.

required deep faith in their gods to an extent inconceivable in the modern scientific age'.[286] A sense of the resultant communal harmony is communicated powerfully in this photograph (figure 5) that spreads across two pages of Hamaya's book.

Figure 5: "People gathered at the ritual for the god of *Sai*" from *Yukiguni* (*Snow Country*) by Hamaya Hiroshi, 1977, (1956).

The wide frame of the image is crowded with people yet none stand out as separate from the group. All seem to interact in different ways, suggesting a shared sense of purpose. Possibly through the use of a flash, the photograph's exposure blackens the background and erases the contextual details, while at the same time highlighting the human subjects. This sharp division between foreground and background not only makes the image dynamic, but also seems to isolate the group of men, imbuing the scene with a timeless sense of community. These visual effects produce a surface impression of community and cultural identity as fundamental to an authentic Japanese landscape. Recalling Williams, the landscape has been divested of a sense of the real hardships of life in a mountainous and bitterly cold landscape. Instead, we view a nostalgic representation of an originary Japan promised as a salve for the loss of meaning noted by Tanaka and Harootunian. In this way, the image can be understood in terms of Hamaya's emotional response to his subject, an aspect that persists alongside an attempted objective perspective. This sense of the snow country as

[286] *Yukiguni*, n.p.g.

a rejuvenating space connects Hamaya's *Yukiguni* with the Kawabata Yasunari (1899–1972) novel of the same name.

Alienation and Rejuvenation in Kawabata Yasunari's *Yukiguni*

There are clear differences between Hamaya's representation of the snow country and that of Kawabata's *Yukiguni* (*Snow Country*) novel.[287] Kawabata's representation is intensely personal and aesthetic, whereas Hamaya often strives for objectivity. Despite this and notwithstanding the fact that one is a fictional creation, there are important similarities connecting Hamaya to Kawabata's protagonist, Shimamura. Both are Tokyo natives who venture into the snow country in search of something lost. Throughout the novel, Kawabata emphasises Shimamura's status as a modern, urban male hollowed out by modernity. We are told, for example, that he is a dance critic who has slowly moved from critiquing Japanese dance forms, with which he became disillusioned, to studying western ballet, performances of which he has seen only in books. This deliberate choice, made because 'nothing could be more comfortable than writing about ballet from books', suggests Shimamura's detachment from the real world.[288] Like Shimamura, Hamaya seemed also to experience a sense of disconnection from the real world in his urban life. This is most apparent from the fact that after making several trips to the snow country he perceived his earlier photographs of Tokyo as superficial and meaningless. In a dramatic turn of events, he burnt almost all these Tokyo film negatives in a traditional New Year's bonfire held in one of the snow country villages.[289]

For Hamaya and Shimamura, the snow country was an antidote to alienation. Shimamura, who 'lived a life of idleness, found that he tended to lose his honesty with himself, and frequently went out alone into the mountains to recover something of it.'[290] In Kawabata's novel, Shimamura seeks rehabilitation in the

[287] The Japanese version was first published as a novel in 1937. The first English translation by Edward Seidensticker was published in 1956; this article refers to the 2011 edition of Seidensticker's translation. Please see bibliography for publication details.
[288] Yasunari Kawabata, *Snow Country*, trans. Edward G. Seidensticker (London: Penguin Classics, 2011), 17.
[289] Reynolds, "Hiroshi Hamaya's Snow Country: A Return to "Japan"," 21.
[290] Kawabata, *Snow Country*, 12.

small *onsen* town in Echigo-Yuzawa in Niigata Province. This is apparent the moment he arrives at his destination: 'Shimamura's nose had been stopped by a stubborn cold, but it cleared to the middle of his head in the cold air, and began running as if the matter in it were washing cleanly away.'[291] The most lucid moments of reconnection to authenticity are found in communion with other people in the village. Shimamura articulates this in conversation with his lover, Komako: 'I've had to come into the mountains to want to talk to people again.'[292] Yet for Shimamura, the people of the village do not necessarily exist separately from the landscape; rather, they are a part of it. With respect to Komako, the narrator goes on to tell us that Shimamura's 'response to the mountains had extended itself to cover her.'[293] This suggests that Shimamura's attraction to Komako is based less on her qualities as an individual and more on what she symbolises for him. Komako, a geisha who, in Shimamura's fantasies, lives a traditional life, provides Shimamura with access to a visceral experience of authenticity based in nature through emotional and sexual union. While listening to Komako play music, for example, Shimamura observes that 'practicing alone, not aware herself of what was happening, perhaps, but with all the wideness of nature in this mountain valley for her companion, she had come quite as a part of nature to take on this special power.'[294]

Although in *Yukiguni* Hamaya strives for objectivity, at times he nonetheless reproduces Kawabata's romantic representation of the snow country and his tendency to elide the individuality of the snow country inhabitants by collapsing them into the protagonist's experience of the natural landscape. The following photograph from Hamaya's series (figure 6) similarly works to embed the depicted human figures into the surrounding landscape.

[291] Ibid., 9.
[292] Ibid., 15.
[293] Ibid., 14.
[294] Ibid., 50.

Figure 6: "Putting up the god of *Sai*" from *Yukiguni* (*Snow Country*) by Hamaya Hiroshi, 1977, (1956).

In this dynamic image, the men seem to dissolve into nature, an effect engendered by the way the figures are arranged around the unlit bonfire as part of its pyramid shape. This is reinforced by the vertical graduation of tones in the photograph, which integrates the men into the natural landscape's tonal palette. Moving up the image, this palate begins with the white snowy ground to blend into the mid grey of the straw bonfire and men's coats, and eventually, the inky blackness of the sky. The distinction between human and landscape is further blurred by swirling white snowflakes. The subjects' distinguishing features are not visible given both their distance from, and position in relation to, the camera. The overall result is one of the men and the landscape merging as a dynamic expression of nature. Despite at times striving for objectivity – as in the previously discussed landscape image (figure 2) and the *wakagi mukae* montage (figure 4) – this photograph suggests that Hamaya, like Kawabata, was motivated by a sentimental and romantic notion of life in the pastoral landscape of the

snow country. Such a motivation connects Hamaya's *Yukiguni* with discourses of rural life that circulated in prewar twentieth century Japan, one of the most persuasive of which was agrarianism, or *nōhonshugi*.

Ideological Discourses of the Pastoral: *Nōhonshugi*

Hamaya's representation of the snow country is one of a preconceived, bounded and idealised space. In *Yukiguni*, the Niigata landscape reflects the photographer's notion of rural life as both foreign and superior to modern, urban ways of living. Although this is an understandable response to a modern crisis of meaning, the fact that the series was created during the period in which the war and its aftermath were most acutely experienced in Japan cannot be overlooked. As an ethnographic work, the series connects with the folklore studies discipline in which Hamaya was keenly interested. This interest is also shared (as discussed in chapter three) by Naitō, who eventually forged a career researching and writing on the topic. Marilyn Ivy has noted that, despite trying to distance itself from state discourse, folklore studies ultimately 'contributed to the chauvinism and cultural nationalism of the wartime period.'[295] Produced in the 1970s and 80s, we might consider Naitō's work to be sufficiently removed from the wartime context. *Yukiguni,* on the other hand, was produced both during and directly following the period of wartime nationalist discourses and thus connects with the agrarian movements of that era that valorised the pastoral.

Tom Brass argues that the discourse of agrarian myth was 'an almost universal national response to the capitalist crisis' of the 1920s and 30s.[296] He points out that although these responses naturally varied in form from country to country, in each instance the agrarian myth was constituted at that time as:

> ...a 'pure' (or middle) peasantry engaged in smallholding cultivation within the context of an equally 'pure' village community (that is unsullied by an external capitalism) is presented as embodying all the positive and culturally specific attributes that are constitutive of a 'pure' national identity, which is

[295] Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing: Modernity, Phantasm, Japan*, 94.
[296] Tom Brass, *Peasants, Populism and Postmodernism: The Return of the Agrarian Myth*, The Library of Peasant Studies (London: Frank Cass, 2000), 3.

> protected in turn by these same peasants (=warriors-who-defend-the-nation). De-essentialization of the peasantry corresponds to alienation from an 'authentic' selfhood and thus estrangement from a 'natural' and ancient identity by a combination of 'foreign' others: capitalism, socialism and/or colonialism.[297]

Nōhonshugi, as the Japanese iteration of this agrarian myth, emerged as an ideology in the wake of the Meiji Restoration and Japan's consequent rapid modernisation.[298] This ideology held that agrarian practices underpinned both the economic state and a unique Japanese spirit. As expressed by its leading thinker and practitioner, Katō Kanji (1884–1965), *nōhonshugi* was the suppression of 'one's ego through devotion to growing crops, an enterprise best performed by self-sufficient villages composed of patriarchal families.' [299] According to Katō, there were several facets to the agrarian lifestyle that characterised Japanese essence. These facets include: physically disciplining the body through hard labour on the farm, resurrecting the fading practice of shrine worship, and practicing traditional martial arts. Farming and combat had to eschew modern implements and methods in favour of tradition, such as the hand-drawn hoe and the sword respectively.[300] Largely due to both the historical association with rice as food and the aesthetics of Japan's rice paddies, a central motif of *nōhonshugi* was the idealised rice farmer. The Japanese rice paddy was considered to embody not just rural Japan, but Japan itself.[301] The rice farmer became so central to Japanese identity in the era between wars that by 1935 the Japanese anthropologist Yanagita Kunio (1895–1962) had come to define the 'common people' of Japan solely as rice farmers.[302]

Primarily because Hamaya's series focuses on the winter months during which the Niigata rural landscapes are submerged in snow, there are no depictions of

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[297] Ibid., 36.
[298] Thomas R. H. Havens, "Kato Kanji and the Spirit of Agriculture in Modern Japan," *Monumenta Nipponica* 25, no. 3/4 (1970): 250.
[299] Ibid., 254.
[300] Ibid., 256-7.
[301] Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, *Rice as Self: Japanese Identities through Time* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993), 81-95.
[302] Ibid., 92.

rice farming in the *Yukiguni* book. The photographer did, however, produce iconic images of rice farming in *Uranihon* (*Japan's Back Coast*), a book published in 1957 as a follow up to *Yukiguni. Uranihon* contained an introduction written by Kawabata, author of the *Yukiguni* novel, a fact that further confirms the ideological connection between Kawabata and the photographer. Below is one of the most iconic images in the *Uranihon* collection (figure 7).

Figure 7: "Rice Harvest, Mogami-cho, Sakata City, Yamagata Prefecture, 1955" from *Ura Nihon* (*Japan's Back Coast*) by Hamaya Hiroshi, 1997 (1957).

Although taken in 1955, ten years after the end of wartime, the photograph nonetheless suggests several key aspects of *nōhonshugi*. The image conveys an impression of the rice farmer as a person of individual discipline and self-reliance, while at the same time emphasising the communal working rhythms of the harvest. The former is achieved by the centralised presence of the two

women who fill the image's frame, while a sense of coordinated harmony is produced by the manner in which the eye is drawn from the front figure towards the woman at the rear. Harmony is further suggested in the way that the women are captured in symmetric pose while performing identical harvesting actions. The impression of the women as iconic figures is accentuated by the fact that the face of each is covered. This concealment has the effect of erasing context and subjectivity from the scene, making the women generic signifiers of an idealised Japan.

Fascism's Promise for Modernity

Brass notes that in many modernising nations agrarianism became incorporated into fascist ideology.[303] Like agrarianism, fascism emerged in Japan as a response to growing dissatisfaction with capitalist modernity and an attempt to provide new meaning via a foundational mythology of the nation state. Masao Maruyama notes that although there were clear formal differences between the Shōwa (1926–1989) regime and the regimes of Germany and Italy, the ideological underpinnings of each were ostensibly the same. One structural difference between Japanese and European fascism resided in the fact that Japanese fascism did not emerge as a populist movement. Rather, it was driven by a small but powerful presence in government and civil society which exerted a disproportionate influence on the state.[304] Despite this difference, Harootunian notes that in the final analysis, largely by erasing the notion of social divisions and individual identity, each regime sought to 'save capitalism from itself, from the excesses of civil society, and from the class conflict it was capable of producing.'[305]

It is important to explore further the particular national mythology espoused in Japanese fascism in order to understand the discursive context in which Hamaya's *Yukiguni* was produced. This exploration will help us to assess the extent to which Hamaya was influenced by state discourses. Dislocation from old

[303] Brass, *Peasants, Populism and Postmodernism: The Return of the Agrarian Myth*, 20.
[304] Maruyama, *Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics*, 52-7.
[305] Harootunian, cited inTansman, *The Aesthetics of Japanese Fascism*, 140-1.

patterns of living – in conjunction with the failure of the global economy that led to the worldwide depression of the late 1920s – confirmed growing doubts about capitalist modernity to many in Japan. Nina Cornyetz notes that, unlike Germany which suffered defeat in the First World War, Japan had no single definable event to which a prevailing feeling of dissatisfaction could be attributed. Instead, there existed 'a sense of cultural crisis that was widely experienced as loss.'[306] This was engendered by the fear that Japanese civilisation was overrun by Western influences that had become intertwined with modernising efforts in Japan since the Meiji Restoration.[307] By holding the promise of replenishing a sense of community and unifying purpose, fascism emerged as one response to the crisis of modernity. The disenchantment and isolating effects of modern life were addressed in Japan through the renovation of ancient mythology and emphasis on connection with nature.[308] As already discussed, the ideology of *nōhonshugi* was central to this discourse because it promoted agrarian life as an intrinsic feature of national identity. Fascism, in other words, sought to unite the population, to provide a sense of superior cultural uniqueness that connected individuals and communities together. It thus appeared to provide an antidote to the fracturing of old structures brought about by modernisation.

The sense of unity promised by fascism required significant sacrifice by Japanese citizens, and so a new spirituality that served state interests was also instituted. As symbolic head of spirituality and the state, the Emperor embodied the higher force to which sacrifice should be made.[309] Subsequently the national body was rendered sacred through its association to the Emperor. The Emperor's status as supreme *kami*, the apotheosis of nature's power, meant that a nexus formed between the Emperor, the state, and nature.[310] As a consequence, a central motif in Japanese fascist aesthetics was the frequent association of nature and the

[306] Nina Cornyetz, "Fascist Aesthetics and the Politics of Representation in Kawabata Yasunari," in *The Culture of Japanese Fascism*, ed. Alan Tansman (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2009), 337.
[307] Ibid.
[308] Tansman, *The Aesthetics of Japanese Fascism*, 2-5.
[309] Walter Skya, *Japan's Holy War: The Ideology of Radical Shintō Ultranationalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009).
[310] Stuart D.B. Picken, *Sourcebook in Shinto: Selected Documents* (London: Praeger, 2004); Kojin Karatani, *History and Repetition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 61.

rural with an essential national identity. This, in fact, extended beyond the realm of ideological discourse and into politics, with some regarding agrarianism as a foundation for a new state model. Maruyama notes that among major political thinkers in the 1930s there existed a concept of the village as an ideal upon which to base the Japanese state. For example, Gondō Seikyō (1868–1937), a central figure in the reactionary May 15 Incident of 1932, was highly critical of state exploitation of the provinces in the process of modernisation.[311] This criticism was driven not only by Gondō's outrage at the abject poverty that prevailed at the time in rural Japan but also by a strong belief in village life. As Maruyama puts it, Gondō wanted the state to be 'based on the native-village community' and 'built up from the bottom like a pyramid.'[312] Tachibana Kōsaburō (1893–1974), a second key figure of the May 15 Incident, argued that agrarian life was an essential state of being for Japanese people. In his *Principles of Japan's Patriotic Reformation* he wrote: 'what is tilling the soil if not the very basis of human life?' He further claimed that 'only by agrarianism can a country become eternal, and that is especially the case for Japan.'[313] Maruyama notes that agrarianism's proponents, such as Gondō and Tachibana, were at odds with others Rightists who believed in industrial development. This led to a contradiction in the fascist state in that it sought wholesale industrial development on the one hand – thus privileging the urban centre over the rural periphery – while positing agrarianism as a cultural ideal on the other. For this reason, Maruyama points out that 'as "fascism" descends from the realm of ideas into the world of reality, agrarianism is bound to turn into an illusion.'[314] The fascist state, inherently militaristic and aggressively expansionist, could never subsist on agriculture alone, but must rely on the tools of modernity to achieve its expansionist aims at the expense of those who supposedly represented the agrarian ideal. In other words, the fascist state's reliance on industrial modes of

[311] The May 15 Incident was an attempted *coup d'état* carried out by ultra-right factions of the military and some civilians in order to supplant the democratically elected government and replace it with a military state headed by the Emperor. This included the assassination of then-Prime Minister Inukai Tsuyoshi (1855-1932). Despite assassinating the head of state, the perpetrators received only relatively light punishment.
[312] Masao Maruyama, "Agrarianism," in *Japan 1931-1945: Miltarism, Fascism, Japanism?*, ed. Ivan Morris (Boston: D.C. Heath and Company, 1963), 56-7.
[313] Ibid., 43.
[314] *Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics*, 52-7.

production revealed the ambiguity at the heart of the urban/pastoral binary.

However, the illusory nature of agrarianism did not lessen its power in fascist discourse. As discussed above, the agrarian ideal of a close union between humans and nature is fundamental to the paradox of fascism's promised anti-modern utopia. This is because the agrarian ideal as a communal-social model is the obvious antithesis to capitalist modernity. The connection to traditional mythology and folklore and a relationship with nature that had been lost to urban subjects became key ideological tools through which fascist discourse, utilising visual and literary art mediums, sought to mobilise the public. This discourse not only took the form of state driven cultural productions but ultimately governed cultural production.[315] It thus came to shape works such as Kawabata's *Yukiguni* novel, and, to some extent, Hamaya's photographic depiction of the snow country. In suggesting this I do not mean to imply that Hamaya consciously produced a work of propaganda. Rather, given the power of the state discourses and systems of knowledge operating in Japan at the time, it would have been almost impossible for these to not have in some way influenced his photographic work. We might note, for example, that Hamaya was employed by several state-sponsored wartime publications, including *FRONT*, [316] a propaganda magazine intended for foreign audiences which, alongside romantic portrayals of agrarian life in Japan's colonies, showcased the various military aspects of Japan's war efforts (figure 9 shows the front cover of a 1942 edition of this magazine). Hamaya's own contribution seems mainly to have been the photographing of military manoeuvres, which he is depicted doing in figure 8 below.

[315] Two important discussions of this have been provided by Peter B. High in his book *The Imperial Screen: Japanese Film Culture in the Fifteen Years War,* and in the case of literature and other popular entertainment by Alan Tansman in *The Aesthetics of Japanese Fascism*. Please see bibliography for publication details.
[316] *FRONT* was published between 1942–45 by Tōhōsha, a publishing company set up at the behest of the military command and funded by private corporations. Its principal intended audience was the countries that comprised the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere (Shirayama 2003, 382).

Figure 8: Hamaya photographing military manoeuvres.

Figure 9: Cover of *FRONT* (photographer unknown), No. 3-4, 1942. Figure 10 (below) was published in this issue.

Hamaya's most well known military manoeuvre image, however, is figure 10 below. Of particular interest in the context of image modification discussed in the thesis introduction is the fact that the figure 10 photograph is known to have been heavily manipulated. Several images were overlayed into a single work in order to convey a sense of overwhelming military force.

Figure 10: “Untitled” by Hamaya Hiroshi from *FRONT*, No. 3-4, 1942.

Although Hamaya’s involvement in these projects can be explained by the fact that much work for freelance photographers during the war period came from the state, it is also clear that he was at times swept up in the militarist discourses of the era. He recounted later how he was intoxicated by the displays of military power he photographed: ‘Being in the midst of the explosive noise of the bombers and the deafening roar of the tanks set my blood racing. My sluggish spirits were swept away. I was wildly enthusiastic, thinking, “arrows or bullets, bring them on”.’[317] This enthusiasm seems to have been short lived, however. Jonathon Reynolds speculates that Hamaya’s decision to resign after only one year with *FRONT* was motivated by ‘growing frustration with the military and disgust over the duplicity of wartime propaganda’ in which he had played a part.[318] Later, he came to express regret at his involvement, for compromising his independence as a photographer through the nature of the images that he helped to produce, and also for readily manipulating those images.[319]

[317] Cited in Reynolds, "Hiroshi Hamaya's Snow Country: A Return to "Japan"," 22.
[318] Ibid., 24.
[319] Clark, "Hamaya Hiroshi (1915-1999) and Photographic Modernism in Japan". npg.

Conclusion

Hamaya's subsequent regret at what he clearly came to see as his breach of ethical standards in his work with the wartime regime reminds us again of his commitment as photographer to objectively document. By allowing himself to be co-opted into wartime propaganda, and especially by altering the captured content of his images to produce this propaganda, he deviated from what he saw as an honest mode of representation. This preferred method is founded on a perception of a world that is separate and peripheral to the subjective self and which is therefore available to be recorded by the photographer. Such an approach seems to rely, at least in part, upon a belief in the camera as simply a device that records, an objective eye unmediated by the subject controlling it. This idea is very much in line with a faith in photography as an unbiased medium with the potential to bypass cultural divisions and particularities in order to present a universalised sense of humanity. The *Family of Man* exhibition, and to some extent the *Magnum* photo agency, were two prominent examples of this perception of photographic representation. Hamaya's involvement with both the exhibition and the agency reflects the extent to which his work accords with this type of universal humanism which found expression through photography.

The universality in *Yukiguni*, however, does not transcend international borders, but instead seeks to provide a unified sense of Japanese identity founded in the agrarian lifestyle. In the snowy regions of northern Japan, Hamaya felt he had accessed an 'authentic' way of being for Japanese people, one that is depicted as the opposite of the modernity found in the urban spaces of Japan's major cities. To counter the objectifying and alienating effects of living in the urban space that was in particular a feature of Takanashi's *Tokyojin* (chapter two) depiction of Tokyo, Japan's archetypal urban space, Hamaya posits an uncomplicated portrayal of rural life that seems to be free of the travails of modern existence. This idyllic space is one in which a close connection with the rhythms of nature and with one's fellow countrymen can be experienced. Hamaya's portrayal of the snow country, however, is not a wholly romantic one such as that produced by the author Kawabata in his *Yukiguni* novel. Rather, the photographer combined what are undoubtedly romanticised images with images that are

constructed and organised in a scientific manner. We might assume that one driver behind the latter approach – beyond the need to document a putatively disappearing way of life – was an attempt to move away from the highly subjective and dishonest propaganda he was employed to produce by the wartime state. Yet, paradoxically, in this attempt to distance himself from his work displaying – and exaggerating – Japan's military power, he nonetheless reproduced some central discourses around agrarianism that had been propagated by the fascist state.

Rather than merely confirming Hamaya as an unwilling foil of the fascist state, however, the *Yukiguni* series demonstrates the inescapable lure of the modern worldview that seeks its opposite in the rural countryside. This paradox directs our attention to the nature of photographic representation itself. The *Yukiguni* images seem to reveal a struggle between a rationalised, objective approach and a subjective, emotional response to the subject matter depicted. We might view this struggle as a concrete iteration of the similar convergence of material reality and authorship that characterises the medium of photography. In this way, *Yukiguni* embodies the paradox of modernity itself, which saw the modern individual Hamaya attempt to escape the objectifying forces of the era but in doing so merely objectifies both the Niigata landscape and those that dwell in that snow country space.

CHAPTER FIVE:

The Ambiguity in the Archive: Interstitial Moments of Premodern Experience in Suda Issei's *Fushi Kaden*

Introduction

The photo series *Fushi Kaden* (*Transmission of the Flower of Acting Style*) was produced by Suda Issei (b. 1940) several decades after the *Yukiguni* images discussed in the previous chapter. Suda began photographing the material featured in the collection in the early 1970s, with the images published in serial form between 1975 and 1977 in the magazine, *Camera Mainichi*. The collection appeared as a standalone volume in 1978. The images were taken both in Tokyo and during the photographer's travels around Japan, particularly to more remote areas of the archipelago. In that sense, Suda's subject matter is less geographically bounded than that photographed by Hamaya in *Yukiguni.* The title of Suda's monograph references the classic fifteenth century book of the same name that was written by formative Nō theatre director and actor Zeami Motokiyo (1363–1443). Zeami's text, a treatise on the craft of Nō theatre, was an important influence on Suda, who had read it 'avidly.'[320] Suda's appropriation of the title is a telling indicator of his intention to express a sense of an original tradition and cultural identity in the series. As Kaneko Ryūichi and Ivan Vartanian contend, 'with this title, Suda declared his return to an emotional landscape that predates the rise of cities.'[321]

Here, we might draw parallels to the work of Naitō (discussed in chapter three) or Hamaya (chapter four) in the search for nativist origins that predate Japan's modern era. Yet there is an important difference between the work of Suda and those other photographers: where Naitō sought the premodern in a symbolic

[320] Orto, "Suda Issei," 361.
[321] Ryūichi and Ivan Vartanian Kaneko, *Japanese Photobooks of the 1960s and '70s* (New York: Aperture, 2009), 212.

sense, and Hamaya more literally, Suda looks to capture the *experience* of Japan's premodernity. While like Naitō, Suda also often employs the flash in his images, he does so in a less overt manner intended not so much to illuminate the dark as to capture a sense of ambiguous subjectivity. Suda has in fact stated that he employs the flash when he is 'not sure of its effectiveness' so as to solicit a 'surprised and often perplexed' reaction from his subjects.[322] His intention is to capture 'the complex expression my subjects wear as a result of thinking various things instantly and simultaneously.'[323] Through this methodology, Suda seeks in *Fushi Kaden* to access a visceral experience of premodernity that is counter to the logic of modern daily life and which according to the thinking of the modern subject is found largely in the practice of traditional culture.

In addition to the camera flash, Suda's use of a German made Rollieflex camera is a signature aspect not only of *Fushi Kaden*, but also of many of the images produced by the photographer throughout his career. Just as the flash can illuminate detail within a scene, the Rollieflex is known for its ability to extract detail. This camera is also distinctive for its square frame and, given the close proximity between lens and film-plane, has the capacity to produce very sharp images. The Rollieflex also uses a larger, 6 by 6 centimetre negative, producing images of a higher resolution and wider tonal range than the 35mm cameras more widely used at the time during which Suda worked and which, incidentally, were the cameras of choice for several of the photographers in this thesis. The square format, wide tonal range, and clarity of images produced by Suda's first camera became central to his aesthetic approach throughout a very successful career.

Suda received his first camera of this type from his father upon entering the Tokyo College of Photography after finishing High School.[324] He graduated from the College in 1962 and in 1967 began working with *Tenjō Sajiki*, an avant garde theatre group. This group was headed by Terayama Shūji (1935-1983), poet,

[322] Suda, cited in Rena Silverman, "Japanese Swordsman with a Camera," *New York Times* (2014).
[323] Suda, cited in ibid.
[324] Orto, "Suda Issei," 361.

filmmaker, stage director, and occasional photographer, whose surreal and often confronting theatre and film work made him a provocative and well known public figure in the 1960s and 70s. Following his departure from *Tenjō Sajiki*, Suda went on to have a highly successful career. In 1976 his work was included in an exhibition of Japanese photography at the Kunsthaus Graz (an internationally renowned modern art museum) in Austria, and in the same year he won the New Artist Award from the Photographic Society of Japan. He has also held solo exhibitions, published several books, and received other prestigious awards. In 1983 he received the annual award from the Photographic Society of Japan, the domestic photography award at the Higashikawa International Photography Festival, and the 1997 Domon Ken Prize for his book *Ningen no kioku* (*Human Memory*). This last work was a recapitulation of his thirty year career. [325]

By employing the Rollieflex and camera flash Suda utilises the tools and aesthetics of technological modernity to uncover a Japanese experience that is posited as binarily opposed to modern society. The illuminating power of the flash in conjunction with the clarity in the images produced by this camera evidence an attempt to forensically uncover a past way of being that Suda sees as persisting in the in-between moments of modern life in Japan. In *Fushi Kaden*, Suda sought to capture these moments and assemble them into an archive of sorts. This archive is fundamentally a rearticulation of an often repeated discourse in Japanese society regarding its origins. Discourse of this nature was explored in the previous chapters that examined the work of Naitō and Hamaya. Like those two photographers, Suda sought to capture a sense of meaningful existence with an emphasis on communal living. Like Hamaya, Suda also sought communion with nature. In the cases of Hamaya and Suda particularly, we can ultimately understand their photographic projects as the unconscious acts of self-affirmation by modern subjects who must define a past so as to ground themselves in the here and now. Suda's *Fushi Kaden* creates the sense, emphasised by the presence of surrealist themes, that this self-affirmation is a subterranean, almost unconscious invocation of the premodern that is

[325] Ibid.

paradoxically only accessible to the modern subject via modern means. Suda's use of framing, flash, and posing all denote a specific intent to document, with optimum clarity, a Japan he feared was disappearing.

Archive creation is ostensibly a process of objective documentation. While the clearly subjective nature of Suda's work speaks against what we might normally associate with the process of documentation that constitutes the act of archive creation, *Fushi Kaden* nonetheless reflects what Jacques Derrida contends is a fundamental condition of the archive. Derrida observes that because archives are intended as a model for a future audience, they in fact constitute a look to the future rather than to the past. The archivist works with the future in mind; he or she assembles a range of documents into an intelligible narrative that is ultimately a subjective creation for future reference. Suda has assembled an intriguing range of documents of his own creation aimed at preserving a lost or at least fast disappearing particular Japanese experience. A distinction might be made here between Suda and the conventional archivist in the sense that Suda's documents are not relics of the past but images of his own creation. However, the subjects of his photographs in *Fushi Kaden* ultimately belong to a past for which he longed, despite encountering these subjects as a corporeal, living presence. Yet in this documentation of 'lost' Japanese particularity, Suda acts out a specific condition of modernity, a turn to an imagined past in order to affirm one's present identity. As an act that is born from insecurity, Suda's work reveals to us the ambiguous nature of identity construction. His images also make clear that, like the photographic medium itself, the enunciation of identity is characterised by a destabilising interface of imagination and material reality.

Suda's Archive Fever: Identity and Discourse

Like the work of Naitō and Hamaya, Suda's depiction of premodern Japan is associated with a modern worldview grounded in a notion of teleological progress. This is not to say that the three photographers adhered to what Benjamin argued was an unquestioning faith in the inherent goodness of the new. Indeed, it was the very questioning of modern progress that motivated their respective projects. In their own particular way of representing the past,

however, each demonstrates an epistemological grounding in modern systems of thought. This is apparent in the very fact that all three work in the quintessentially modern medium of photography, a medium that is fundamentally anathema to the ways of being they seek to capture. For Naitō, this incongruity was particularly obvious in his use of flash, that most calibrated and rationalised of lighting sources. In regards to Hamaya and Suda, entrenchment in modernity is expressed most clearly in their methodologies. In its ethnographic capacity, Hamaya's work exhibits the objectifying worldview of the rationalising sciences which, as Heidegger argues, underpin modernity. Suda's work shows a similar worldview, although more aligned with the historiographical methods of the archivist. As an interface between the performative aspects of image production and the material reality from which the image is produced, the archive creates similar instabilities of meaning to that exhibited in Naitō and Hamaya's work. As elaborated upon below, at the heart of this instability is the manner in which the *Fushi Kaden* images not only reflect the search for identity that, as Derrida has argued, constitutes archive production, but in their archival status also sit within a broader system of discursivity, a status which Foucault argues in fact defines the archive.

In his essay *Archive Fever,* Derrida characterises the archive as a kind of layering of impressions that nonetheless always contains a promise for the archivist of access both to the primordial and to a unique identity.[326] Derrida argues that although we commonly associate the archive with the past and usually regard such collections as a literal record, archives are also inherently concerned with the future. For Derrida, more precisely, the archive '*call*[s] *into question* the coming of the future.'[327] The archive is ostensibly a particular definition of the past – however objective the archivist's methods – and as a definition takes its meaning from an opposing concept of future. The archive is a 'question of the future, the question of the future itself, the question of a response, of a promise

[326] Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 19.
[327] Ibid., 26.

and of a responsibility for tomorrow.'[328] While this point is especially important to the following discussion of Suda's *Fushi Kaden*, even more crucial is Derrida's notion of 'archive fever' or 'the archive drive.'[329] Derrida conceives this 'fever' or 'drive' in the context of Freud's 'death drive' as an often irrepressible urge towards self-annihilation that is an essential feature of the human psyche. While it might be misconstrued as a literal wish for death, this 'fever' is better understood as an urge to return to origins, to the nothingness from which each person emerges into the world. In terms of the archive, Derrida argues that this drive is at once an act of effacement and self-affirmation.

The archive, moreover, invariably requires a substrate upon which the archivist leaves an impression in the process of bringing the collection into being. This substrate need not simply be a surface – for example, the parchment or paper upon which she or he writes – but can also be understood as the physical artefacts, landscapes, and other aspects of material culture that are collated to form the archive. Through the performative act of archive production, the archivist invariably conceals or erases some part of that material (cultural) reality upon which she or he draws.[330] This is why Derrida argues that 'archive fever' in fact 'works *to destroy the archive: on the condition of effacing* but also *with a view to effacing* its own "proper" traces – which cannot consequently be called "proper".'[331] Furthermore, to inscribe one's own vision and intentions upon this material culture is to affirm identity, an act that is 'first of all self-repetition, self-confirmation in a *yes, yes*' that as an affirmation of self-identity inherently requires a designation of 'the One,' or 'the Unique'.[332] In *Archive Fever,* Derrida makes this point in response to essentialist claims about Jewish identity made by Jewish scholar Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi (1932-2009). Derrida's point, however, applies to any essentialist designation, including the sense of Japanese identity that Suda seeks in *Fushi Kaden.* In Suda's case, the photographer himself is the archivist, photographing in Tokyo but also frequently travelling to Japan's

[328] Ibid., 27.
[329] Ibid., 19.
[330] Ibid., 22-3.
[331] Ibid., 13-14.
[332] Ibid., 51.

provincial areas, collecting material for the photographic book format considered by Derrida to be 'another species of the archive.'[333] Consequently, we might consider the landscape, traditions, memories, and subjective experiences of the subjects whom Suda photographed as the source of his archival material and thus constituting the substrate upon which Suda makes his own impression.

Whereas Derrida is most interested in the complicated motivations and intentions of the archivist, Michel Foucault's perspective of the archive is more centred on broader discursive functions. In this sense, Foucault's understanding is quite different from the classical definition of the archive as a cohesive assembly of artefacts that are seen to represent the past. Contrary to notions of a 'sum of all the texts that a culture has kept upon its person as documents attesting to its own past, or as evidence of a continuing identity', the archive for Foucault is the 'system of discursivity' that governs what can be said.[334] This is comparable to Derrida's insistence on the archive as the domain of the 'archon' (those who govern absolutely) by which society is ordered.[335] Foucault distinguishes the 'historical *a priori'* from a classical understanding of *a priori* as grounds for validation. The historical *a priori,* for Foucault, is 'a condition of reality for statements'; a set of rules that 'characterize a discursive practice.'[336] Statements function within a variety of discursive systems which, as a cohesive whole, constitute the archive, that which 'differentiates discourses in their multiple existence and specifies them in their own duration.'[337] In this sense, the statement is defined 'at the outset' by the archive which is thus '*the system of its enuncibility.*'[338] Foucault's conception of the archive is of particular importance to the following analysis of Suda's *Fushi Kaden,* because, for Foucault, the archive works against the possibility of representing a singular and authentic Japanese identity. Instead, identity formation is revealed as a complex and often fraught

[333] Ibid., 46.
[334] Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 129.
[335] Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, 9-10.
[336] Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, 127.
[337] Ibid., 129.
[338] Ibid.

endeavour that is informed by larger discourses. In a sense, Suda, by travelling throughout rural Japan to make his photographs, conceives of these areas as archives in a classical sense, as repositories of authentic 'documents' – or at least the raw materials for the production thereof – to substantiate a particular idea of Japanese cultural identity. However, if the *Fushi Kaden* project is understood in terms of Foucault's archive, we might consider this project a statement, an enunciation shaped by a broader 'system of discursivity' about what it means to be Japanese. The resultant images, when collated into a whole, occupy an ambiguous position somewhere between archive (itself beset with ambiguities) and discourse.

Suda, Terayama Shūji, and a Postwar Longing for Origins

It is clear that Suda's time with Terayama's *Tenjō Sajiki* theatre group exerted considerable influence upon his photographic work. There are three themes from Terayama's work that filtered through into many images that Suda produced. First, both had an interest in traditional or 'native' Japanese culture, specifically traditional festivals and Nō theatre. Second, and related to this, was an abiding preoccupation with an assumed authenticity believed to be present in the rural landscape and its communities. This belief was reinforced by the ethnographic work of figures such as Yanagita Kunio (as briefly discussed in chapter three, and more extensively in chapter six), and broader agrarian discourses (see chapter four).[339] Third, both Terayama and Suda sought to give expression to the underlying mystery of daily existence through their work. It should be noted that although Terayama's work was an important influence on Suda, and that the work of each is characterised by shared themes, the respective styles in which both artists communicated these themes are in distinct contrast. While a confluence of traditional culture and surrealism features in the imagery that each produced, because Suda's work follows a documentary style it is in marked contrast to Terayama's theatre. The entirely fictional nature of Terayama's work gives it an otherworldly feel; a disjointed world in which symbols of tradition and nationalism are mingled with highly sexualised themes

[339] Kaneko, *Japanese Photobooks of the 1960s and '70s*, 212.

and imagery. Carol Sorgenfrei has identified four distinct phases of expression in performances by *Tenjō Sajiki,* the first two being especially relevant to Suda's work. In the first, between 1967 and 1969, themes of 'rural superstition, folklore, dreams, and magic' are mixed with highly dramatic music, lighting, 'shocking (often vulgar or highly sexualised) imagery' and black comedy.[340] The second phase, between late 1968 and 1970, was underpinned by a belief in the innate creativity of the common person and thus non-professionals were hired as actors. The driving motivation behind the works produced in this period was to 'advocate personal metamorphosis through encouraging ordinary people to express themselves and to develop the capacity for imagination.'[341] Implicit in this was a rejection of the rigid structures of modern society accompanied by a yearning for an imagined premodern Japan. The third and fourth phases are perhaps less pertinent to discussion of Suda's photographs, but involved an effort to break down the structures of traditional theatre by performing in unconventional venues, and later by directly involving the audience in often confronting ways.[342]

A survey of Suda's photographs reveals strong influences of the first two phases, in particular a preoccupation with local traditions as a subject.[343] Suda frequently captures people in traditional dress who are often engaged in traditional performance or ceremony. The influence of the second phase is perhaps less immediately clear, however Suda's repeated depiction – and repetition is a fundamental feature of archive fever as Derrida conceives it – of those performing traditional culture hints at a desire to discover a fundamental creativity in the average person. Crucially, Suda often elected to travel to rural areas and photograph ordinary people in order to fulfil this need in a way that recalls Terayama's similar perception of the countryside as a last vestige of a

[340] Carol Fisher Sorgenfrei, *Unspeakable Acts: The Avant-Garde Theatre of Terayama Shūji* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), 36.
[341] Ibid.
[342] Ibid., 36-7.
[343] In this, Suda was not alone. Other examples are the work of Domon Ken on village life and temples, Hiroshi Hamaya's series *Snow Land* (see chapter four) and Kojima Ichiro's *Tsugaru* (both taken in remote northern regions of Japan) and Kimura Ihei's photographs of traditional theatre and rural life. All reflected a search for putative 'natural' state of Japan.

discarded world in which remnants of premodern Japan might be discovered. As Sorgenfrei has pointed out, such an attitude was not uncommon in artists of this period given the devastating aftermath of the Pacific War, American Occupation, and social upheaval that had marked the previous three decades. Like a number of the photographers featured in this thesis, many artists sought a Japanese identity 'not totally bound to the United States' and, in doing so, mourned the loss of Japanese purity.[344]

Terayama's 1974 film *Den'en ni shisu* (usually translated as *Death In The Country*[345] but sometimes as *Cache-Cache Pastoral*[346]) evokes this sense of longing for the premodern. The film is set in an ahistorical, often disturbing, but unmistakably rural landscape infused with dark magic and superstition. A central theme in the film is a presumably autobiographical yearning for the mother figure who is embodied in both a literal sense and in the character of a neighbour's young wife. The film, and especially the mother figure, can be taken as an allegory that works through ideas about Japanese identity. Reminiscent of Etō Jun's critique of postwar Japanese society,[347] the film's working through of identity occurs principally through the body of the mother figure, symbolising an innocent Japan corrupted by American influence and modernisation in general. This is compounded by the ambivalent sense of attraction and repulsion the central character feels towards the mother figure as originary source of Japan's traditional past, and also in the Freudian sense of the death drive and the yearning for self-annihilation that constitutes a search for origins. Although the mother figure herself is largely absent from Suda's landscape, this ambiguous relation to origins that characterises Terayama's artistic production is also a central theme of Suda's work.

[344] Sorgenfrei, *Unspeakable Acts: The Avant-Garde Theatre of Terayama Shūji*, 44.
[345] Steven C. Ridgley, *Japanese Counterculture: The Antiestablishment Art of Terayama Shūji* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).
[346] Sorgenfrei, *Unspeakable Acts: The Avant-Garde Theatre of Terayama Shūji*.
[347] Jun Etō, *Seijuku to Sōkai: Haha No Hokai (Maturity and Loss: The Collapse of the Mother)* (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō, 1967).

Zeami's *Fushi Kaden* and *Nō*: Archetypes of Identity

Another form of theatre that influenced Suda in the creation of *Fushi Kaden* was Nō, a genre promoted in the modern era by chauvinistic prewar Japanese authorities as exemplifying principles central to Japanese culture. For instance, Nō was a centrepiece in the conception of Japan as a museum which, as Gennifer Weisenfeld has argued, the Japanese government sought to market to the West during the 1930s through its *Nippon* magazine.[348] According to Donald Keene, narrative in this form of theatre is less important than its sensory aspects. Since unlike classical Greek plays, characters in Nō plays are not grounded in a common humanity, they are 'hardly more than beautiful shadows, the momentary embodiments of great emotions.'[349] The actors' slow, meticulously studied movements also emphasise aesthetics – the audience is compelled to pay at least as much attention to these aesthetics as to the narrative unfolding before them. Moreover, Donald Richie contends that the inscrutability of a play's lyrics – often in an archaic dialect that can be inaccessible to educated Japanese – directs appreciation towards the style and tone of delivery rather than content (although accompanying texts were often provided to help decipher meaning).[350] Last, and perhaps most significant, is the limited expression available to the actor due to the traditional practice of wearing a mask which erases the individual identity of the performer. While it is argued that this individuality is expressed through subtleties of movement and voice, this is something that perhaps only an aficionado can observe.[351] The mask thus becomes a signifier of an abstract entity.

The fact that Nō theatre's intensely stylised nature promises an experience that transcends temporal existence facilitated this form of theatre's incorporation into the national imaginary as an exemplar of Japanese cultural identity. This

[348] Gennifer Weisenfeld, "Touring Japan-as-Museum: Nippon and Other Japanese Imperialist Travelogues," *Positions* 8, no. 3 (2000).
[349] Donald Keene, *Nō: The Classical Theatre of Japan* (Tokyo: Kodansha International Ltd., 1975), 11.
[350] Donald Richie, "Notes on the Noh," *The Hudson Review* 18, no. 1 (1965).
[351] Peter Lamarque, "Expression and the Mask: The Dissolution of Personality in Noh," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 47, no. 2 (1989).

became particularly important after the Meiji Restoration when Nō, although initially rejected by the new regime due to its strong connection to the Tokugawa Shogunate, soon became an important example of nationalistic Japanese culture for display to visiting foreign dignitaries in much the same way that opera had been shown to Japanese diplomats visiting Europe. Later, wartime governments were keen to promote Nō as a form of Japanese culture unsullied by foreign influence, to the extent that new plays were written that emphasised patriotic values.[352] Although performed widely between 1942 and 1945, these works disappeared after the war ended. In the postwar era, SCAP (Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers) initially opposed the performance of Nō due to this connection to wartime propaganda. However, the genre underwent resurgence and by the mid 1960s – just before Suda commenced the *Fushi Kaden* photo series – performances were at 'a high level.'[353] Zeami's *Fushi Kaden,* also known as *Kadensho,* was one of several texts the famous actor wrote about the craft, and the collection of these works shaped Nō into its present characteristic form. Zeami is accordingly an icon of the genre, a founding father to the extent that an unbroken hereditary line can be traced from him to the present day Kanze School, a troupe still dedicated to Zeami's teachings.[354] The *Fushi Kaden* treatise seeks to enable the aspiring actor to reach the apex of his abilities (Nō actors are traditionally male). This apex constitutes the full realisation of the actor's *hana*, the cohesive manifestation of performance skills into a transcendent performance. In his foreword to the 1968 edition of *Kadensho,* Hayashi Shūseki contends that 'to have *hana* is to have grasped the universal within the individual.'[355] Suda's interest in Nō theatre, and what he absorbed through avid reading of Zeami's writings on Nō, were transferred to his own *Fushi Kaden* project. The photographer was especially interested in indigenous culture, of which Nō, which originated from the vernacular form of theatre known as Sarugaku, is arguably an archetypal example. Since the late sixteenth

[352] Keene, *Nō: The Classical Theatre of Japan*, 50-1.
[353] Ibid., 52.
[354] Eric C. Rath, "Remembering Zeami: The Kanze School and Its Patriarch," *Asian Theatre Journal* 20, no. 2 (2003).
[355] Shūseki Hayashi, "Foreword," in *Kadensho* (Japan: Sumiya-Shinobe Publishing Institute 1968), 8.

century, however, the techniques and methods of Nō have become increasingly preserved and codified.[356] This codification was intended to distil the essence of the genre and in turn suspend it in time. The art form thus became susceptible to interpretation as ahistorical and as contributing to a mythical Japanese culture. Consequently, Nō became a reference for the modern Japanese subject in the postwar era who sought an identity independent of the United States.

The connection between Suda's photographs and Nō is not entirely explicit – if this were the case Suda might have photographed Nō performances in order to further preserve what he saw. Instead, for Suda, Nō represented an impetus for discovery, to seek out some unique Japanese experience that seemed to be inherent in the various rituals and ceremonies he photographed in the countryside. The clear link to performance is evident in the following images (figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1**:** "Gujohachiman Gifu, 1976" from *Fushi Kaden* by Suda Issei, 2012 [1978].

[356] Yasuo Nakamura, *Noh: The Cassical Theater*, trans. Don Kenny (Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1971), 132-36.

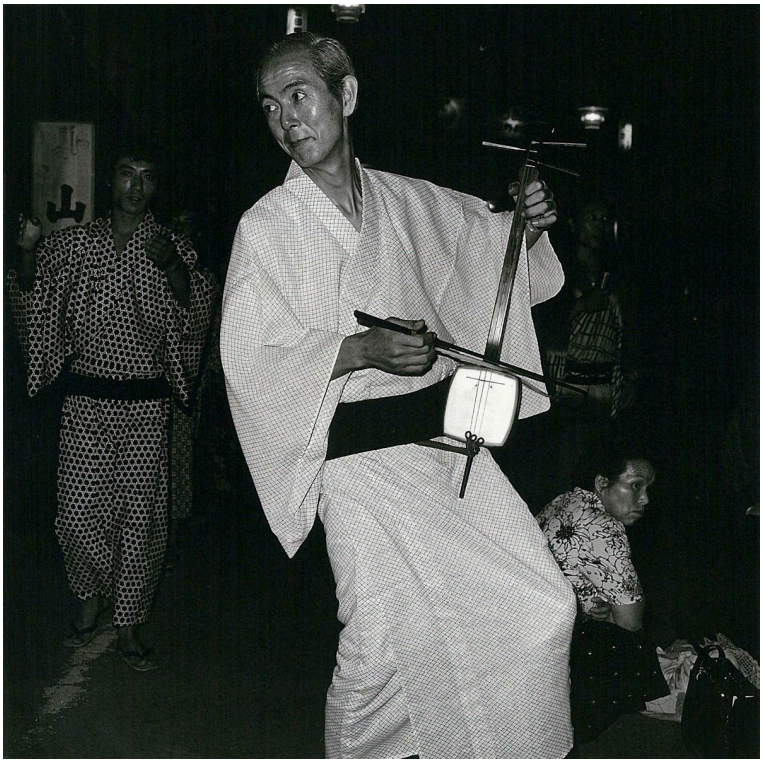

Figure 2**: "**Kaze no Bon Yatsuo Toyama, 1976" from *Fushi Kaden* by Suda Issei, 2012 [1978].

While these dance moves are a far cry from the highly codified and static nature of Nō, these images nevertheless have an indirect connection to this cultural form in their explicit depiction of traditional performance as a craft in action. The intimate snapshot feel evokes a sense of the vernacular. In the act of performance these men might be accessing some primordial Japanese experience that Nō in its original Sarugaku form once signified. This is suggested by the way each has been captured in an almost casual pose so that traditional performance seems to come naturally to these men. This effect is enhanced by faint background impressions of fellow performers in similarly informal positions. Both figures seem to have easy access to premodern experience, with their nonchalant demeanour making this experience seem readily accessible to those who identify as Japanese. This effect functions on a symbolic level also with each man captured so as to evoke a sense of the statuesque, frozen as emblems in the broader iconography of traditional Japanese culture. The images furthermore draw on the subtler shades of dark and light that Tanizaki attributed to Nō and more broadly to the specifics of Japanese taste (as discussed in chapter three). Alongside these relatively straightforward connotations of

native tradition, however, figures 1 and 2 have a slightly unsettling edge that destabilises too simplistic an interpretation. This is attributable to the slightly off balance poses of the men that makes them seem suspended against the dark background. Moreover, the otherwise ahistorical representation of traditional culture is disrupted in figure 1 by the fact that the man's wristwatch is clearly visible. We are pointedly reminded that the man is in fact a modern subject participating in traditional festivities. This reminds the viewer of the ambiguous nature of the archive in which the substrate – in Suda's case the material culture of daily life – is in constant tension with the archivist's intentions, producing an instability of meaning that undermines a sense of straightforward documentation.

Figure 3**:** "Kaze no Bon Yatsuo Toyama, 1976" from *Fushi Kaden* by Suda Issei, 2012 [1978].

The image above depicts young women performing an O-Bon dance in rural Toyama. While the initial impression is of harmonious cultural practice, an instability similar to that found in the images of the male figures discussed above is nonetheless apparent. Certainly, the bodies of the performers convey a sense of dynamic grace as they appear to merge and yet resist each other in a symmetrical pattern that transforms them into almost entirely stylised figures. This symmetry, in conjunction with the partial concealment of the faces of the dancers results in an impression of anonymity. Suppressed individualism such as this suggests a timeless and particularistic notion of Japanese culture, unsullied by the particularities of the context in which the image was created. Yet the way these figures (and similarly those in figures 1 and 2) are captured in motion introduces a transitory sense that resists their being too simplistically iconised. That the dancers are caught between one motion and the next undermines any impression of being entirely fixed in time, reminding the viewer that Suda seeks to capture an imagined experiential reality which, while attributed to premodern Japan, has a fluid sense that defies constraint by a single time or place.

While the above images are clearly products of the specific sociopolitical and cultural circumstances of postwar Japan, Suda nonetheless suggests a sense of timeless indigenous experience. A key element in Suda's suspension of his subjects in motion is the use of the flash. While an alternative might have been the use of a film suitable for low light situations, this would have resulted in a more grainy appearance, higher contrast, and most likely some motion blur, all of which would have resulted in a very different impression in the images. Selecting the flash, however, allows the photographer to use a fine grained film, suggesting a quest for clarity. Having sought out subjects that in them point to authenticity, Suda looks to go beyond this to the very origin that archive production promises. In the above images, this almost subliminal reality is hinted at by the slightly jarring effect induced both by the poses of the human subjects and flash use. This jarring is further augmented by the way in which Suda's characteristically square format, which permits an aspect ratio associated with harmoniously balanced and composed images, is in constant tension with the off balance poses of the human subjects. An ambiguity results from the

tension between the seeming rationality and order imposed by the limits of the frame – limits that are imposed by the technological apparatus – and the comparative disorder of the material reality and lived experience in front of the camera.

Penetrating the Surface of Modern Life

In chapter three we saw how Naitō's use of flash – in conjunction with high contrast –evokes the blinding trauma of modern experience. Although at times producing a similar effect in the way he isolates the subject against a dark background, Suda's use of the flash is more literal in its representative function. As opposed to the high contrast, grainy expressiveness of Naitō's images, Suda's flash seeks absolute clarity. This is combined with the use of a medium format camera that produces negatives of relatively higher resolution and fine grained film that is processed in a manner that renders a wide range of tonality. While each of these methodological devices combines to bring the everyday of Japan's traditional life into sharp relief, it is the flash that is key to producing the photographer's desired effect.

Suda's use of flash is at its most distinctive when he is photographing traditional ceremonies, such as those depicted in the above three images. There are clearly some practical considerations behind this, given that many of these photographs have been taken at night and thus available light was presumably poor. Nonetheless, it might have been possible for Suda to use a tripod and capture these dancers at a slower shutter speed, blurring their movements and producing more fluid images – an entirely different effect. Furthermore, the flash is often used by Suda to create an intense, full frontal illumination, as in the two images below (figures 4 and 5).

Figure 4**: "**Yo-matsuri Chichibu Saitama, 1975" from *Fushi Kaden* by Suda Issei, 2012 [1978].

Figure 5**: "**Teppo-matsuri Ogana Chichibu Saitama, 1976" from *Fushi Kaden* by Suda Issei, 2012 [1978].

The penetrating light of the flash in these images exposes all of the minute surface details on the subject's skin, so that each wrinkle and blemish is defined. There are various ways that a flash might be deployed, including off-camera. Yet that method could never have so fully illuminated the subjects being photographed. The flash in these photographs, in fact, produces a similar effect to Naitō's images, with the men's faces isolated against inky black backgrounds. The faces thus appear to emerge from some dark underworld of traditional Japanese mythology. Yet at the same time the sharp detail evokes the forensic view of the microscope and reflects the photographer's penetrating gaze. Thus, somewhat paradoxically, these images simultaneously suggest tradition and modernity, or more precisely, the depiction of a premodern past through Suda's modern lens. There is therefore an inherent tension, one that echoes throughout the series – and one also seen in Hamaya's *Yukiguni* images (chapter four) – in Suda's attempts to muster the rational forces of technology towards the capturing of modernity's obverse. This contradiction is fundamental to the act of archiving, where modernity reaffirms itself as modern, and where the substrate of material culture meets up against the projected wishes and desires of the archivist.

The contrast of dark and light is more muted in the following photograph (figure 6), in which three girls in festival attire are illuminated against the urban landscape.

Figure 6**: "**Miuramisaki Kanagawa, 1977" from *Fushi Kaden* by Suda Issei, 2012 [1978].

Evoking a different effect to figures 4 and 5, in this image Suda's subjects are captured from further away and appear unaware of the photographer's presence. This lends the image a less forensic quality, at least in a straightforward sense, as the flash has not exposed the same level of detail on the subjects' bodies. Nevertheless, there is a sense of the archive in this image, with the flash seeming to single out the girls as artefacts of tradition from the surface, or indeed substrate, of a modern landscape. The choice of the young women as subject denotes purity, an effect that is heightened by the attire of the subjects, a literal sign of tradition. In combination with the seemingly casual nature of the scene, this picture suggests the archive in that these girls, conceived as signifiers of the past in contrast to their modern surrounds, are incorporated into what Derrida calls 'a consignation,' or a cohesive assembly of signs, a consignation that in this

instance defines Japan in relation to its origin.[357] As in many of the other images in *Fushi Kaden*, some aspects of the material culture with which Suda works disrupts a one dimensional and ahistorical idea of tradition. Despite the tight framing of the image, the use of flash, and the blurring of the background, the urban landscape is unmistakeable, reminding us of the modern context in which the image was produced. Similarly, the haircuts of the young women are a modern style and given that their outfits are identical, the kimono/yukata could be rental rather than custom made. Further, the confident mannerisms displayed by the young women are decidedly not of the demure and restrained kind associated with traditional gendered Japanese ideals of comportment for women. The viewer is reminded that these are modern young women no longer constrained by the traditional patriarchal structures that governed the behaviour of women in the past. The encroachment of these modern contingencies results in the figures of the young women embodying an ambiguous notion of traditional practice rather than any simplistic representation of a timeless authenticity.

A Taxonomy of Authentic Moments

When viewing *Fushi Kaden* as a cohesive whole it becomes apparent that Suda's choice of square format, in conjunction with a tendency to centralise his subject in the frame, gives his images a sense of taxonomy. The concept of photographic taxonomy is particularly associated with August Sander's series *Citizens of the Twentieth Century,* a large, posthumously assembled series of outdoor portraits taken mainly in Germany in the early twentieth century. In this context, the viewer gains a sense that Suda is assembling a collection of 'types' much as Sander did. Sander, however, was a proponent of the so-called school of New Objectivity and engaged in a self-acknowledged effort towards a literally objective study. Each of his carefully posed subjects, moreover, were complicit in the project. Suda is not quite so literal; he does not see ultimate reality as a temporal, objective truth in front of the lens but rather as something located just below the surface fabric of everyday existence and which he as the photographer,

[357] Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, 14.

therefore, must draw out. To do this, he appears almost to trick the subject, to disrupt their conscious posing in order that they might reveal a submerged authenticity to the camera. Moreover, rather than a straightforward taxonomy, Suda's 'types' are intended to provide a composite picture of an imagined authentic Japan, or Japanese life, that has been wrenched away both by the incursion of modernity and the experience of annihilation in war. Despite this important difference, a similarity to Sander's work is apparent in the way the subject sometimes is carefully located in the centre of the frame, as in the images below (figures 7 and 8).

Figure 7**:** "Botan-matsuri Myounji-Temple Shiobara Tochigi, 1976" from *Fushi Kaden* by Suda Issei, 2012 [1978].

Figure 8**: "**Sanja-matsuri Asakusa Tokyo, 1976" from *Fushi Kaden* by Suda Issei, 2012 [1978].

This effect is particularly noticeable in figure 7, where the young girl stands awkwardly, suggesting a discomfort at being photographed. Although this effect is less pronounced in figure 8, the girl on the right, too, is awkwardly posed and also seems to want to evade the camera. This is not to suggest that the photographer has in anyway coerced his subjects, but instead to bring attention again to the particular way in which Suda is assembling an archive in *Fushi Kaden.* Despite the fixity that the square frame and the precise placement of his subjects suggests, we can see in these images a sense of transition. The awkward poses convey the wish of the subjects that the photographic act be over with, making the viewer aware of the temporary nature of the photograph as an event with a before and after. We are, furthermore, led to ponder what it is that they wish to escape towards.

In keeping with the idea of taxonomy, Suda employs other motifs to denote different types that are classifications of experience rather than of character. If many of Suda's subjects are depicted in traditional costume, others are captured

in the context of nature, or in a 'natural' context, as in the two images below (figures 9 and 10):

Figure 9**: "**Sanja-matsuri Asakusa Tokyo, 1976" from *Fushi Kaden* by Suda Issei, 2012 [1978].

Figure 10**: "**Kamakura Kanagawa, 1975" from *Fushi Kaden* by Suda Issei, 2012 [1978].

There is a sense of voyeurism to these two images. In figure 9 this is suggested by the camera's position behind the branches in the foreground, as if the photographer is observing his subject while concealed behind the bushes. This is certainly a possibility, given Suda's preferred method of catching his subjects unawares. This sense of the photographer's self-concealment evokes a feeling of a rare and special phenomenon, a unique moment between the two subjects who are caught in their natural environment. Figure 10 conveys a similar sentiment in that Suda has captured a private moment between a couple as they move through a natural landscape. A fleeting connectedness to nature is suggested by the way the pair seems to have arisen from the surrounding foliage and might soon recede back into it. Although the subjects in these images are not especially premodern in appearance, both photographs nonetheless seem to record a particular intimacy of Japanese life discursively associated with a traditional and uniquely Japanese experience of connectedness to nature, family, and community. It is this experience that is considered most threatened by the rationalising forces of modern society. Paradoxically, of course, this putative past is here also captured using a medium and methodology deeply entrenched in precisely the rationalising and objectifying worldview that the photographer seeks to escape. This incongruity is given a further layer of disruption by the contemporary context of the images – the presence of modernity within the images belying any simplistic or historically bounded notion of identity. When viewed in the context of the entire *Fushi Kaden* series, these images contribute to the fluidly enigmatic and ambiguous 'consignation' of premodern Japan that Suda has assembled in the book.

The images discussed thus far might be taken as reasonably straightforward examples of Suda's quest to record the last vestiges of an originary Japanese experience: the subjects largely wear traditional outfits, and are engaged in traditional performance or in the context of the natural environment. However, Suda also employs another especially modern perspective in his attempt to uncover an experiential notion of Japanese identity. As discussed earlier, avant garde theatre director Terayama was an important influence on Suda, and surrealism was clearly a central influence on Terayama's work. In Suda's

photographs, surrealist themes are invoked by the way he tries to catch his subject off guard in the temporal/spatial interstices between gestures and poses. This strategy seems geared towards his desire to delve below the subjects' everyday, conscious façade in order to expose their subconscious experience. While apparent to some extent in the images discussed above, this approach is particularly evident in the photographs below (figures 11 and 12).

Figure 11**: "**Ume-matsuri Sankeien Yokohama Kanagawa, 1977" from *Fushi Kaden* by Suda Issei, 2012 [1978].

Figure 12: **"**Hanagasa-matsuri Obanazawa Yamagata, 1976" from *Fushi Kaden* by Suda Issei, 2012 [1978].

The subjects in both photographs have been captured in the process of blinking, in the moment between one countenance and the next. This might be understood as Suda trying to draw out the individuality of the subject. While this may have been his conscious intention, it is difficult, when taken in the broader context of the *Fushi Kaden* series, not to also interpret the capturing of the blink as an attempt to symbolise a break in the flow of the everyday, literal experience and thus suggest something deeper and subconscious. This suggests a desire for an authenticity particular to Japan's premodernity, a type of experience outside those of work and consumption, and found only in the interstices of quotidian events.

A Discourse with History

As illustrated above, a common motif in *Fushi Kaden* is the association of the Japanese subject to the natural world. This holds clear connotations to an historical conception of Japanese identity as grounded in the aesthetic experience of nature. As Julia Adeney Thomas has argued, this particular idea of

nature became a central tenet of Japanese state political ideology in the 1930s.[358] The association of Japan with nature and aesthetics was a consequence of a rapid modernisation that led to a fear for the loss of traditional life. Although a feature of many modern societies, in Japan the modern was often critiqued as a set of ideas imported from the West. This resulted in the construction of a sublime and aesthetic Japanese identity that was counterpoised against the putatively cold and rational West. As already noted, the most significant example of this was the Romantic movement of the 1930s – strongly associated with wartime ideology – that conceived Japanese essence as ahistorical and associated with nature and aesthetic beauty. In the postwar, which saw dramatic changes to the fabric of Japanese society, modernisation was once more associated with the West, specifically America, and was symbolised by the often crass commercialism that began to appear in Japan.[359] Many liberal Japanese intellectuals of the 1960s became alarmed by the fast rate of postwar economic development, and feared for the very future of Japanese society. The discourses supported by this group of intellectuals amounted to a second coming of earlier Japanese Romanticism. The fears held by these thinkers were perhaps understandable given the breadth of immediate postwar social reform that outside forces imposed. There were, of course, dangers in positing, as the group did, a timeless and authentic Japan in direct opposition to modernity by revisiting the path taken by first wave Romantic ideology in the prewar and wartime eras. As discussed in the introductory chapter, this movement was a reaction to what was seen as modernity's detrimental impact upon a sense of Japanese particularity. In chapter four it was further noted that literary production by this movement tended to present an idea of a sad and beautiful Japan that omitted the contingent realities of war as well as other sociopolitical aspects such as class and gender.

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[358] Julia Adeney Thomas, *Reconfiguring Modernity: Concepts of Nature in Japanese Political Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

[359] This congruence of modernity and 'Americanism' can be traced back to the interwar period not only in Japan but also in Europe. See, for instance Harry Harootunian, *History's Disquiet: Modernity, Cultural Practice, and the Question of Everyday Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 89-97, 119.

The notion of a transcendental Japan took a dark turn in the 1930s, when politics and aesthetics merged in fascism. Alan Tansman has demonstrated how *The Bridges of Japan,* the 1936 essay by the prominent first wave Romantic writer Yoshida Yojūrō, influenced a generation of young Japanese men to willingly sacrifice themselves for the nation. Tansman attributes this to Yasuda's characterisation of Japan as an ethereal and elemental force. In Yasuda's writing, to be Japanese is to be the antithesis of austere, rational, and teleological modernity. Japanese identity is a connection to an atemporal world that cannot be grasped with rational thought: it is the realm of aesthetics and beauty. Tansman argues that this provides the grounds in *The Bridges of Japan* for the 'spiritual glorification of the shedding of blood.'[360] Yasuda identified a lack of authentic and subjective Japanese experience, a spiritual 'void.' He then 'offered a way across [this void] via the bridge'.[361] The absence of Japanese subjectivity was attributed to the 'loss of a mythic natural "condition," when the Emperor, the gods, and the people were one.'[362] In this way, Tansman argues, Yasuda merged aesthetic and political to create 'fascist moments' which, while not explicitly exhorting self-sacrifice for Japan, were even more effective for not doing so. Rather than direct coercion, Yasuda naturalised violent self-sacrifice by enabling access to an authentic Japanese experience, which was attained through submitting oneself to a higher power. The 'bridge' was the self-sacrificing, aesthetic, political act, a melding of 'nature and artifice' committed in the name of a higher force embodied by the Japanese Emperor. At the particular historical moment in which it appeared, *The Bridges of Japan* ultimately blurred the 'distinctions between art and life and between subject and object. In this sense, the essay contributed to a poetics of sorrow that extolled the virtues of frailty and defeat, while colluding with a fascist ideology of violence and coercion.'[363] This encouraged 'a vision of reality as myth,' a myth in which Japan was destined to express its authenticity through colonial expansion.[364]

[360] Tansman, *The Aesthetics of Japanese Fascism*, 49.
[361] Ibid., 103.
[362] Ibid.
[363] Ibid., 101.
[364] Ibid., 102.

Suda's project, of course, has none of the militaristic overtones found in Yasuda's writing nor do his photographs have the potential to incite violent sacrifice. There is, however, a sense in *Fushi Kaden* that Suda is in many ways seeking a comparable notion of Japanese identity to that extolled in Yasuda's writing. The 'real' Japan for Suda is an atemporal experience found by rejecting the hypermodernised urban space in order to become close to nature, a state also closely associated with the aesthetic experience of traditional performance. As has been argued so far, Suda's photo series is also a product of what Derrida calls an 'archive drive,' an impulse that also functions in the Foucauldian sense. As an ostensible archive that makes a specific statement about Japanese identity, Suda's *Fushi Kaden* sits within a discursive system that, in its most extreme form, enabled a dangerous militarism to govern Japanese society in the 1930s and 1940s. For this reason the sometimes nationalistic undertones of *Fushi Kaden*, which are undoubtedly unintentional, can remind us of a dark period in Japanese history. Furthermore, although an effacement of subjectivity is arguably an inevitable consequence of any photographic project, by positing an idea of Japan that is ahistorical and associated with tradition, one risks effacing the real diversity and ambiguity associated with subjective experience in Japanese society and contributing to an ongoing discourse of essentialism.

Conclusion

While the images that feature in *Fushi Kaden* to some extent provide a sense of the persistent traditions of modern Japan, they also convey information about the individual photographer and the society within which he was embedded. Like the *Yukiguni* images discussed in the previous chapter, Suda's images bear the imprint of a modern individual looking for meaning in traditional practices that are posited as the extant remnants of a past way of life. This modern imprint is noticeable in the sharp definition and precise composition of the images, the touches of surrealism (which hints at a very modern idea of a primordial subconscious) and most importantly in the way that the project itself constitutes an attempt to archive. As highlighted thus far, such attempts to capture a notion of the past are problematic, because this inevitably requires an objectification of the living subject. This is notwithstanding the fact that a level of objectification, is,

of course, to some degree unavoidable in any attempt to photograph. The act of photographing does after all require an object to be portrayed. The effort to depict 'the past,' however, rests on an assumption that the living being before the camera does not exist in the same here and now as the photographer. Beyond the unintended connotations of 'backwardness' that might consequently be ascribed to these 'traditional' subjects, a dichotomy that makes the two appear irreconcilable is also set up, or at least reinforced, between modernity and tradition. As Naitō's *Tōkyō* images attest (chapter three), however, such a neat division need not necessarily occur in photographic depictions of premodernity. This is also true of Suda's images given the way that indications of modernity regularly feature in *Fushi Kaden*.

We cannot be sure whether Suda actually intended to omit any sense of contemporaneity from his images – in fact this seems unlikely when one considers the overall content of the *Fushi Kaden* monograph. Furthermore, small details such as the wristwatch on an otherwise traditionally dressed dancer in figure 1 disrupt what we might consider the prima facie meaning of the image as a bounded portrayal of traditional practices. Beyond the material realities within the frame, Suda's images also reveal the figurative manner in which prevailing discourses operate upon the construction of images. This we saw principally in the connotations of the archive, the implementation of modern technology in the pursuit of almost forensic clarity, and in the unintended reiteration of certain fascistic discourses that had seemingly been surpassed in 1970s Japan. Such discursive aspects remind us that despite the seeming objectivity of photographic representation, photographers nonetheless operate within a discursive system that shapes cultural production.

CHAPTER SIX:

Troubled Paradise: the Complex of Japanese and Okinawan Identities in Tōmatsu Shōmei's *Taiyō no enpitsu*

Introduction

The images discussed in this, the last of three chapters examining the depiction of Japan's rural and natural landscapes, are from Tōmatsu Shōmei's (1930-2012) 1975 monograph entitled *Taiyō no enpitsu* (*The Pencil of the Sun*).[365] This monograph contains a series of photographs that focus on the natural spaces of Okinawa prefecture. Given that Okinawa is a chain of tropical islands situated far south of the main Japanese archipelago, the subject matter depicted in the *Taiyō no enpitsu* images are markedly different to either the snowy landscapes photographed by Hamaya (chapter four) or the traditional practices captured by Suda (chapter five) in both urban and rural locations. Okinawa also differs markedly from the regions covered by Hamaya and Suda in that this site holds a particularly complex place in the imagination of those from the Japanese mainland. This complexity is due to the fact that perceptions of Okinawa are simultaneously informed by the attendant traumas related to the Battle of Okinawa that occurred near the end of the Pacific War, the ongoing occupation by America as a result of that War, later representations of the region as a tropical paradise, and discourses – at times derogatory – that posit the region as an originary locus of Japanese culture.

Tōmatsu made his first journey to Okinawa in February 1969 as a special correspondent for the *Asahi Kamera* magazine, during which time he produced two photographic series for that magazine, as well as a book entitled *Okinawa, Okinawa, Okinawa.* The images he produced during this trip focused on the

[365] *Tōmatsu, Taiyō no enpitsu : Okinawa, umi to sora to shima to hitobito soshite tōnan Ajia e* (*The Pencil of the Sun, Okinawa & S.E.Asia*)

military bases and their surrounding areas, confirming that his central objective was to portray the ongoing American occupation of the region. Tōmatsu visited the region twice again in 1971, before returning in April 1972 to witness the reversion of Okinawa to Japanese rule. In 1973 he moved to the island of Miyako, a relatively remote area of Okinawan Prefecture (the island is located approximately 300 kilometres southwest of the region's main island, known also as Okinawa). Tōmatsu stayed in Miyako for around 7 months; during this period he also travelled to Taiwan and parts of Southeast Asia. Images produced during his time in Miyako, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia were later collated into the *Taiyō no enpitsu* monograph.

For Tōmatsu, Okinawa held a bifurcated symbolic value as both a potent example of the ongoing influence of American power upon Japan and paradoxically as a space to which to retreat from the postwar modernity that was seemingly inextricable from the Americanisation of Japanese society. This chapter and the chapter that follows explore these bifurcated perceptions of Okinawa as depicted in Tōmatsu's photographic work. The current chapter, also the first of the three concentrating on Okinawa, considers Tōmatsu's depiction in *Taiyō no enpitsu* of Okinawa's natural spaces in regards to prevailing discourses of the region as natural paradise and place of cultural origins. The chapter that follows (chapter seven) explores the American military presence in Okinawa's base towns as depicted in the photographer's posthumous monograph *Chewing Gum and Chocolate*. Separating the harsh realities of American occupation from the lived experiences of those inhabiting Okinawa's natural and rural spaces might be considered impossible or misguided. Making this separation in regards to Tōmatsu's work is important, however, because it allows us to understand both the differences and similarities between his dissatisfaction with modernity as a universal phenomenon and with his specific responses to America in postwar Japan.

While visiting the region to depict the concentration of US military in Okinawa, Tōmatsu paradoxically discovered in the island chain a world that seemed to be an antidote against not only the oppressive US presence in Okinawa, but also

against the ills of Japan's Americanised postwar modernity. The images in *Taiyō no enpitsu* were taken during Tōmatsu's journeys to the region following the reversion to Japanese rule, a travel experience that appears to have spurred the photographer into pondering the region's relation to mainland Japan. For Tōmatsu it is clear that this relation was far from simple, not reducible either to unsullied paradise or passive site of oppression. Rather, Okinawa figures in *Taiyō no enpitsu* as a complex entity that, among other things, works to reveal the liminal perspective of the mainlander photographer caught between a desire, on the one hand, for an alternative life outside the rationalising and Americanised urban centres of the Japanese centre and, on the other hand, a clear-eyed understanding of the travails that beset the place in which he sought that alternative life.

More than any other photographer discussed in this thesis, throughout his career Tōmatsu has exhibited an understanding that photographic representation is neither entirely fact nor fiction, but a dynamic relationship between the two. Perhaps because of this understanding, Tōmatsu has resisted the social-documentary tag given to him in much photography commentary. In particular, Tōmatsu sought to differentiate himself from a tendency in Japanese postwar photography to seek the absolute objectivity that is a hallmark of the social-documentary method. To Tōmatsu, any claim of objectivity was ultimately dishonest, given that it of necessity concealed the manner in which the photographer as subject influenced the production of images. In other words, as he famously made clear in response to criticisms made by eminent fellow photographer and critic, Natori Yōnosuke (1910-1962), Tōmatsu never tried to simply document.[366] Rather than exhibiting a purely objective approach to documentary photography, Tōmatsu was a member of a new generation of Japanese photographers who emphasised subjective expression and chose to 'throw themselves into the dynamic push and pull between concreteness and abstraction, interior and exterior, subjectivity and objectivity, and thereby go

[366]Kōtarō Iizawa, "The Evolution of Postwar Photography," in *The History of Japanese Photography*, ed. John Junkerman (London: Yale University Press, 2003), 215.

beyond…straightforward realism.'[367] Working between these different elements heightened the ambiguity that is a feature of Tōmatsu's works.

Tōmatsu's approach to photographic representation in part explains the ambiguity and complexity that characterises not only the images in *Taiyō no enpitsu*, but also those he produced throughout his highly successful career. Born in Nagoya in 1930, Tōmatsu grew up during the '15 Year War' waged by Japan firstly on the continent in China and later against the Allies in the Pacific. He was 15 years old when advance Occupation forces arrived in Japan in August 1945. As will be explored further in chapter seven, this formative experience was to have a lasting effect upon his work. In 1954, Tōmatsu graduated with a degree in economics from Aichi University but abandoned the discipline to pursue his interest in photography. Although largely self-taught, he went on to have an illustrious career in the social-documentary style and is regarded as one of Japan's most influential and revered photographers.[368] In 1957 Tōmatsu received the new artist award from the Japan Photo Critics Association, and the Mainichi Photography Award in 1959. In 1975 he won the annual award from the Photographic Society of Japan, while in 1976 he received the Mainichi Art Award and the Award of Arts from the Minister of Education. He was awarded a Purple Medal of Honour by the Japanese government in 1995, and the Japan Art Grand Prix at the 1999 annual Shincho Awards.[369]

Before commencing the analysis of *Taiyō no enpitsu* in this chapter, it is important to provide a brief account of America's military involvement in Okinawa since the end of the Pacific War. This is done to provide context not only for the discussion that follows in this chapter, but also for the photographic works that are discussed in chapters seven and eight.

The American occupation of Okinawa began directly after the end of the Pacific War in 1945 and continued until 1972, when ownership was ceded back to Japan

[367] Ibid., 217.
[368] Luisa Orto, "Tōmatsu Shōmei," ibid. (New Haven), 364.
[369] Ibid.

after 27 years of direct American rule. As noted in chapter two, with the reduction of American military visibility on the Japanese mainland in the decades after the war, the United States presence became increasingly concentrated in Okinawa. By the late 1960s, when Tōmatsu first came to the islands, US military forces had become so concentrated in Okinawa that the islands were known in American military circles as the 'keystone of the Pacific.' As a prime military supply location and principle staging post for the Vietnam War, the Okinawan island system had in fact become by 1969 one giant storage facility for a huge stockpile of chemical and atomic missile warheads. It was the site of over 80 separate military installations that comprised approximately 75 per cent of American forces in Japan. All of this was located in an area that comprises only .05 per cent of Japan's entire land mass. Hundreds of thousands of American service personnel transited through Okinawa en route to battlefields in Vietnam, as did 75 per cent of all supplies for the conflict. Huge B-52 bombers launched devastating raids on Southeast Asia from Kadena Air Base, the main aircraft facility on Okinawa.[370] The island's role in the increasingly bloody South East Asian conflict was the catalyst for dissent from both local Okinawans and mainland Japanese who objected to the excessive American military presence.

War and Paradise: Okinawa's Ambiguity in Mainland Imaginaries

Comparisons can be made between Tōmatsu's depiction of Okinawa and Hamaya's depiction of Japan's mountainous regions in *Yukiguni* (discussed in chapter four). As Hamaya does in his representation of the winter Niigata landscape, Tōmatsu depicts Okinawa Prefecture's peripheral spaces from the viewpoint of the urban centre, constructing these spaces as sites of natural beauty that nourish a community-centred way of life. Also similar to Hamaya, Tōmatsu saw Okinawa's outer islands as to some extent the last vestiges of a premodern culture, a place where he was often 'confronted with the complicated mixed emotions of tenderness and nostalgia…as if it was a subconscious calling of ethnic blood or an invaluable culture that Japan had abandoned in the process

[370] Jon Mitchell, "Vietnam: Okinawa's Forgotten War," *The Asia Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 13, no. 1 (2015): 1-2.

of rapid modernisation.'[371] The two photographers also shared an interest in ethnographic interpretations of the regions they photographed. While Hamaya's technical approach to *Yukiguni* was profoundly informed by ethnographers Ichikawa and Shibusawa, Tōmatsu's encounter with Okinawa was a response to Yanagita Kunio's 1951 text entitled, *Kaijo no michi* (*Road Across the Sea*). As Eiji Oguma observes, this publication was the culmination of Yanagita's theory that the origins of Japanese culture could be traced not (as he had famously argued earlier) from Japan's mountainous regions, but from the islands to the south.[372]

While there are similarities, there are also, however, important differences between the respective depictions of Japan's rural periphery in the work of Tōmatsu and Hamaya. The most striking is the extent to which awareness of both the material circumstances and power dynamics at play within Okinawa resonates throughout *Taiyō no enpitsu*. Hamaya largely omitted the effects of war or other sociopolitical circumstances from his *Yukiguni* images. In contrast, it is clear that, as Jonathon Reynolds observes, Tōmatsu was keenly aware of the oppression felt by Okinawans not only as a result of the all encompassing American military presence in their region, but also as a result of the complicity of the Japanese government regarding the American project.[373] Drawn to the region by the American presence, Tōmatsu set out to document the US military facilities in the area. These are the images featured in his earlier 1969 *Okinawa, Okinawa, Okinawa* photobook, a collection in which, as Reynolds notes, 'the American military presence was perceived to be not just an offence against the rights of Okinawan people, but a violation of nature itself.'[374]

While Tōmatsu's material provides a pictorial account of the struggles of the people of Okinawa, of equal significance is the fact that the figures depicted in

[371] Shōmei Tōmatsu, "Toward a Chaotic Sea," in *Setting Sun: Writings by Japanese Photographers*, ed. Akihiro Hatanaka Ivan Vartanian, Yutaka Kambayashi (New York: Goliga Books 2006), 31.
[372] Eiji Oguma, *A Genealogy of 'Japanese' Self-Images*, ed. Yoshio Sugimoto, trans. David Askew, Japanese Society Series (Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2002), 192-3.
[373] Jonathon M. Reynolds, *Allegories of Time and Space: Japanese Identity in Photography and Architecture* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015), 186.
[374] Ibid., 154.

the images are not constructed merely as passive victims. For in addition to 'represent[ing] the history of the region's victimisation at the hands of outside forces,' the images also profile 'the spirit of resistance that confronted that exploitation.'[375] Furthermore, Tōmatsu appears to be keenly aware of his own place within the historical power structures in which Okinawa was enmeshed. He was aware that as a Japanese mainlander inhabiting the Okinawan space, he was in some way aligned with the Japanese government that allowed the American military occupation of Okinawa to continue.[376]

Despite his awareness of Okinawa's social and political predicaments, Tōmatsu remained to some extent in the thrall of a contradictory impression of the region as an idyllic paradise, a last vestige of a lifeworld grounded in community, traditions, and the rhythms of nature. This paradoxical attitude towards Okinawa was perhaps unremarkable for a 'native' of mainland Japan. As Gerald Figal notes, during the postwar era 'the word Okinawa itself has stood for different things to different people over time; for most mainland Japanese visitors, it has increasingly shifted from a site of "tragic war history" to a site of "tropical paradise" while maintaining the connotation of "U.S. Bases" and, by association, "foreign" or "not entirely Japanese".'[377] Writing in the context of Okinawa as tourist haven, Figal notes that before functioning in this way for mainland Japanese people, the region was considered a site of original Japanese culture in accord with Yanagita's revised origins theory. Prior to the circulation of Yanagita's ideas, there had been less clarity around any notion of a connection between Okinawa and Japanese identity, the result perhaps of the archipelago's geographical positioning of equal distance between both Japan and China. Nevertheless, if links relating to identity were as yet unclear, the region suddenly assumed importance in terms of the new nation's economic and strategic needs at the outset of Japan's journey towards modernisation. At the time of the Meiji Restoration (1868), the former Ryukyu kingdom had ostensible vassal status with China. However, the islands were also subject to the control mechanisms of

[375] Ibid., 166.
[376] Ibid.
[377] Gerald Figal, *Beachheads: War, Peace, and Tourism in Postwar Okinawa*, ed. Mark Selden, Asia/Pacific/Perspectives (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012), 6.

mainland Japan's Satsuma domain. During negotiations with Chinese Qing dynasty representatives chaired by the former US President, Ulysses S. Grant, representatives of the recently formed Meiji state tried to justify a grab for formal sovereignty over present day Okinawa by making the case of shared language and religion, and even of ancestral connections between the Japanese Emperor and the Ryukyu nobility. Qing representatives, however, rebutted any claim of affinity by pointing out that there was little similarity between mainland Shinto and religious practice in the Ryukyu kingdom.[378]

As well as demonstrating Okinawa's liminal political status, this exchange also foreshadowed the extent to which Okinawa would be subjected to the interests of outside powers, particularly mainland Japan and the United States. It is no accident that at the moment the Meiji regime began to shape Japan into a modern nation it also started conceptualising its ethnic origins in order to define itself as a distinctive whole. The shoring up of identity is a fundamental necessity for sovereign nations, particularly given that these nations are often constructed in response to perceptions of outside threat. In the case of early Meiji Japan, such outside threat came from the increasing Western presence in East Asia, which was quite reasonably perceived as an expression of European colonial aspirations.[379] More generally, however, the search for origins is a fundamental aspect of a teleological modernity that continually defines itself in opposition to the non-modern. Part of this is nostalgia for the pastoral that objectifies landscape and people by projecting the idyllic fantasies of the modern state upon the subjects and territories it seeks to encompass. Despite his awareness of Okinawa's historical and contemporary struggles, Tōmatsu himself was not entirely immune to the modern propensity to project fantasy desires onto that site. We can perhaps attribute this to the alienation he felt as an urban Japanese who experienced occupation by a foreign power followed by Japan's high speed economic growth. This latter for him was inseparable from the 'Americanisation' of Japan.

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[378] Eiji Oguma, *The Boundaries of 'the Japanese,' Volume 1: Okinawa 1818-1972 Inclusion and Exclusion*, ed. Yoshio Sugimoto, trans. Leonie R. Stickland, vol. 1, Japanese Society Press (Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2014), 29-35.
[379] Ibid., 19.

While Tōmatsu was painfully aware of Okinawa's predicament, it is worth exploring how popular discourses in Japan about Okinawa may have also influenced the photographer's *Taiyō no enpitsu* portrayal of the island site. While these discourses eventually – after Reversion – constructed Okinawa as an exotic paradise, in the first two to three decades after the war the principal appeal of the region was for mainland visitors who had lost relatives during the Battle of Okinawa. Thus in the few decades following war's end, tourism was characterised by what Figal refers to as 'tours among the ruins.'[380] The most important was The Southern Battle Sites Tour (*Nambu Senseki Meguri*), which incorporated the proliferation of war memorials erected to commemorate the huge loss of life that occurred at the time of the American invasion.[381] The centrepiece of these war memorials was one erected to commemorate the *Himeyuri* Student Nurse Corps that was made up of 219 young female students who were coerced by the Japanese military into undertaking nursing duties under the most extreme conditions of war. Forced to accompany Japanese infantry into combat, most of the girls lost their lives on the battlefield. As Linda Asako Angst notes, in the popular imagination the *Himeyuri* narrative came to symbolise the violation of the nation in Japanese popular imagination. The young Okinawan women of the corps came to embody Japanese innocence sacrificed to the senseless barbarism of war as a victim of both the heartlessness of the Japanese state and brutality of the American military.[382] By focussing on young women as victims, moreover, powerbrokers seeking to promote the islands as a tourist site were able to use the trope of femininity to erode the impression of Okinawa as, in Figal's words, a 'large blood-soaked battlefield dotted with hundreds of war monuments.'[383] In other words, foregrounding the *Himeyuri* narrative softened the disturbing impact of the island's war history.

[380] Figal, *Beachheads: War, Peace, and Tourism in Postwar Okinawa*, 25.
[381] Ibid., 37.
[382] Linda Isako Angst, "The Sacrifice of a Schoolgirl: The 1995 Rape Case, Discourses of Power, and Women's Lives in Okinawa," *Critical Asian Studies* 33, no. 2 (2001): 250.
[383] Figal, *Beachheads: War, Peace, and Tourism in Postwar Okinawa*, 40.

The central figure in this process was the young female tour bus guide. Initially required by the Okinawan Tourism Association to be under 22 years of age, a move which clearly sought to bring the *Himeyuri* girls uncannily back to life, these women were highly trained to provide moving accounts of relevant war history to passengers, who in surveys rated these guides as the most favourable aspect of the tours.[384] As memories of war waned, and the mainland relatives of those who died in Okinawa completed their journeys of commemoration, tourist numbers subsided. As a consequence, the effort was made to further develop this region as a place for leisure travel in the mould of Hawai'i.[385] This was aided by the 1972 reversion back to Japanese rule, which not only meant that Japanese people no longer needed a passport to travel to Okinawa, but also allowed an influx of mainland capital investment for development, a process spearheaded by the Japanese government.[386] The reversion to Japanese rule was thus in many ways the catalyst for the construction of Okinawa as 'Japan's Hawai'i.'

In its remodelling as a holiday destination in the decades following the end of the Pacific War, Okinawa's trajectory was comparable to that of Hawai'i, a place which in the postwar era increasingly became an object of yearning for many Japanese. Not insignificant in this comparison is the fact that Hawai'i's relation to Japan in terms of its war history is in some ways similar to Okinawa. Tezuka Yoshiharu contends that the idea of Hawai'i as paradise, which had already been framed by Hollywood for many decades, increasingly came to be represented in Japanese cinema as 'an imagined paradise onto which Japanese people project their *akogare* (yearning/adoration) and *yume* (dreams).'[387] Tezuka identifies three distinct stages of this process, stages that span the immediate postwar to the present. In the period following the war until the mid 1960s, for the Japanese people Hawai'i was a site upon which traumas relating to the war played out.[388] In Japan's economic boom that culminated in the late 1980s collapse of the so-

[384] Ibid., 43.
[385] Osamu Tada, "Constructing Okinawa as Japan's Hawai'i: From Honeymoon Boom to Resort Paradise," *Japanese Studies* 35, no. 3 (2016): 293-4.
[386] Ibid., 295.
[387] Yoshiharu Tezuka, "A Discursive History of Hawai`I as Paradise in Japanese Cinema: Whose Dreamland Is It and What End Does the Dream Serve?," ibid.(2015): 273.
[388] Ibid., 274.

called 'bubble' economy, Hawai'i became a liminal space in which Japanese people could come to terms with America through exploring the hybrid Japanese-American culture that had evolved there. This hybrid was, according to Tezuka, 'a test version of the American Dream as it was conceived in Japan.'[389] With the bubble collapse, Hawai'i became a place of healing for those Japanese who were suffering due to the long economic stagnation that began in the 1990s. In this third stage and in contrast to the second, the 'American' cultural element of Hawai'i was downplayed so that the healing portrayed was attributed to the power of the local culture and lifestyle of Hawai'i. Tezuka argues that these representations were a part of larger discursive formations that shaped public perceptions of Hawai'i in Japan.[390]

In the years following Okinawa's reversion to Japanese rule in 1972, the same period in which Tōmatsu photographed many of the images that would appear in *Taiyō no enpitsu*, Okinawa would increasingly be modelled on the 'island paradise' archetype of Hawai'i. This is perhaps unsurprising given the similarities between the two regions: both have strong connotations of war trauma and both are culturally hybrid. Most significantly, both had become objects of nostalgic longing. The opportunity to become a tourist destination was identified by local authorities during the revegetation of Okinawa after the devastation wrought upon it during the American invasion of its main islands. The landscape was repopulated with plants commonly associated with tropical islands such as palm trees and hibiscus in order to make Okinawa seem more 'exotic.'[391] The 'tropicalisation' of the landscape was conducted to attract mainland Japanese but also to meet the tastes of US military personnel on leave. Tada Osamu suggests that a principal market for tourism in Okinawa were newlyweds, due to a 'honeymoon boom' that had emerged in the 1950s and was intertwined with a yearning for Hawai'i in Japanese popular culture.[392] As will become more explicit in the remainder of this chapter, this yearning for Okinawa

[389] Ibid., 280.
[390] Ibid., 274.
[391] Figal, *Beachheads: War, Peace, and Tourism in Postwar Okinawa*, 90-2.
[392] Tada, "Constructing Okinawa as Japan's Hawai'i: From Honeymoon Boom to Resort Paradise," 287.

as an island paradise is one characteristic that links Tōmatsu's *Taiyō no enpitsu* to these popular Japanese conceptions of the region.

Okinawa as Counter-Space to Modernity

Given that Tōmatsu worked in Okinawa at the same time Okinawa was being constructed as a tropical paradise by mainland commercial interests, it might be expected that *Taiyō no enpitsu* at times would portray Okinawa in a similar fashion. There is no suggestion here, however, that the photographer engaged in a slavish reiteration of cultural norms. Rather, the presence of this influence in his work is an expression of the power that these images of tropical paradise had (and perhaps continue to have) for the modern individual living in Japan's urban centres. Tōmatsu was particularly critical of the alienating effects of Japan's urban spaces, which he regarded as wholly governed by consumerist values. This perception is evident in the following passage he wrote in *Taiyō no enpitsu*:

> [In cities] everyone carries a shadow of loneliness. In the desire to live a normal life, their fractured selves desperately cry for help. Waiting on the other end of these cries are commercial products – the monster of materialism; this monster grows bigger by feeding from people's loneliness. The harder people try to run away from their feelings of loneliness, the more they eventually play into the hand of this monster. As a result, people cannot help but try to purchase their dreams and to decorate themselves with material goods. In the static space of the concrete jungle no longer does anyone ask the question: "aren't you lonely?" This is because there is no point in restating the fact that all people [in the city] are unquestionably lonely.[393]

Okinawa, with its bright sunshine, lush landscape, and fluid oceans, would clearly have provided a welcome relief from Tokyo's 'static' concrete spaces, as would the diminished presence of consumerism and the sense of community. There is little in his own written accounts to suggest the extent to which the popular discourses discussed above shaped Tōmatsu's preconceptions of

[393] Tōmatsu, *Taiyō no enpitsu : Okinawa, umi to sora to shima to hitobito soshite tōnan ajia e / Tōmatsu Shōmei = the Pencil of the Sun, Okinawa & S.E.Asia / by Shomei Tomatsu*, n.p.g.

Okinawa's natural spaces, particularly given the fact that he first visited the region in order to photograph the ongoing American occupation. Nonetheless, as will be elaborated upon a little further below, the images Tōmatsu produced of Okinawa's natural spaces show some overlap with discourses fantasising Okinawa as a tropical paradise.

Before focusing his camera upon the natural spaces, however, Tōmatsu was most interested in depicting the American military in Okinawa. In *Okinawa, Okinawa, Okinawa*, released six years before *Taiyō no enpitsu*, Tōmatsu depicted the literal and metaphoric violence of war. An example of this is the following sequence of images (figure 1) that are spread across two pages of the *Okinawa, Okinawa, Okinawa* collection.

Figure 1: "Untitled" from *Okinawa, Okinawa, Okinawa* by Tōmatsu Shōmei, 1969.

When read from left to right the sequence seems to replay the experience of America's invasion of Okinawa. At left, soldiers in training move from the foreground towards a small opening in the jungle, poised to penetrate the island's deepest interior (the sexual connotation is employed here deliberately). At centre, despite his innocuous pose, the casual stance of the young American soldier exudes power in the way his body, clothed in his bold and jarring uniform, fills the frame and provides a dark contrast against the image's pale and blurred background. At right, we are witness to some sort of explosive detonation reminding us of the violence of America's shelling of the island during the 1945 invasion. Given that it was this shelling that contributed in large part to

landscape degradation and destruction at that time, the image suggests or even confirms the ongoing recurrence of that trauma. In these three frames, the otherwise peaceful and virginal Okinawan forest is again subject to the violence of American military. Produced in the 1960s, a time when war related tourism was still very popular, the three images remind the viewer of the violence of war.

This emphasis on violence stands in stark contrast to the peaceful scene, taken from *Taiyō no enpitsu*, captured in the image below (figure 2.)

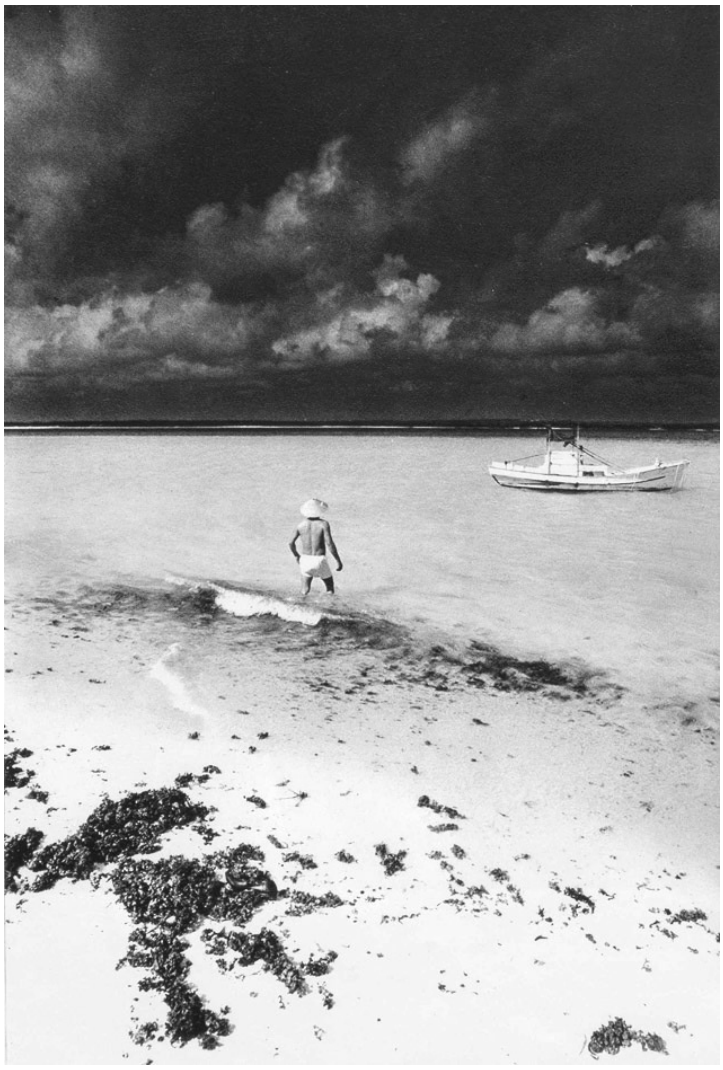

Figure 2: "Kurima" from *Taiyō no enpitsu* (*The Pencil of the Sun*) by Tōmatsu Shōmei, 1975.

There are several photographs in the book similar to this: landscapes that highlight the sparkling beauty of Okinawa Prefecture's natural environment. In

its depiction of a man – who is perhaps a fisherman – wading languidly through crystalline waters, this image might be lifted from a travel brochure. The perfectly level horizon separates sky from sea at the two thirds mark, and evokes the exotic drama of a tropical storm by positing a natural balance between bright sand and dark clouds. This level horizon line is interestingly at odds with the often tilted horizons in Tōmatsu's earlier depictions of Okinawa, as are the increased clarity, stillness and relatively lower tonal contrast. The human figure is positioned almost equidistant between land and sky, suggesting a harmonious relation between the three. It is possible that the darkness of the sky is a deliberate effect, attributable to the photographer's use of a red filter in front of the lens. This is a strategy that tends to increase contrast and darken blue skies when using black & white film. While the photograph depicts an idyllic space, the contrast between dark sky and bright sea can also be read as the representation of binary forces. There is a subtle negative pull to the image that works against an initial impression of paradise, and reflects more broadly the negative charge that runs through many of the images in the series. The perhaps deliberately created dark storm clouds have metaphorical weight, standing in for war trauma, the ongoing presence of American military, or the poverty-induced suffering of many Okinawans. The man wading into the water appears to regard the sky with apprehension, his body tense in anticipation of some forthcoming danger, or perhaps in memory of some previously experienced trauma.

In spite of any influence that tourist discourses may have had on his work, this presence of tension in figure 2 is a point of differentiation between Tōmatsu's work and what one might have observed in typical tourist imagery of the era. This is a difference that will be explored in greater detail later in this chapter. A further key difference between the image above and standard travel imagery is the absence of colour. Colour had been a mainstay in advertising photography for decades by this point and, shortly after this photograph was taken, Tōmatsu himself switched from the black and white technique that had characterised his work until that time to colour photography. Citing improvements in colour film and printing that allowed more control of colour tones as the principal reason for this shift, Tōmatsu never returned to the use of monochrome. Yet he also

notes that 'while I was in Okinawa, it seemed quite natural to me to change to colour photography.'[394] For Tōmatsu, colour film was best suited to capture the vibrant colours of Okinawa that so strongly affected him:

> The scenery of Okinawa is truly beautiful – a transparent blue sky, and a sea so blue that it looks as if it would turn your skin blue if you put your hand in it. The reflection of the sun off the coral reef creates gradations in the sea from horizontal blue through emerald blue to peacock green and cobalt. The sun burns, the wind sparkles. The tones of the tropics are rich with colour.[395]

Nevertheless, his early Okinawa images were in his signature black and white. These photographs comprise the first two thirds of the *Taiyō no enpitsu* book, a section that focuses solely on Okinawa. The remaining third of the book is entirely in colour. While the majority of the colour prints depict scenes from Southeast Asia, there are also a number of Okinawa-scapes. The division in the book marks Tōmatsu's permanent shift to colour.

Tōmatsu would also later explain his shift from black and white to colour as evidence of his declining interest in depicting America in Japan. In his words, this is because 'America can be glimpsed in monochrome photography, but its presence is not felt in colour.'[396] Although the photographer does not elaborate on this intriguing statement, by looking at Tōmatsu's five decade corpus it is possible to read a variety of meanings into these words. For instance, monochrome might be taken as allegorically reflecting the paucity of American culture (at least as this was experienced in Japan) – the lack of depth and meaning of the United States influences that had inundated Japan being more suited to monochrome, a medium that, it might be argued, inhibits the full richness of visual experience. Additionally, the tonal oppositions in black and white imagery might reflect the oppositional way Tōmatsu viewed the intersection of Japanese and American cultures in Japan. It is also possible that

[394] Tōmatsu, cited in "Towards the Sea of Chaos," in *Traces* (Tokyo: Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, 1999), 186-7.
[395] Tōmatsu, cited in ibid.
[396] Tōmatsu, cited in ibid., 187.

the use of monochrome was regarded by the photographer, perhaps on an unconscious level, as more appropriate to the expressive photojournalistic style deployed to render his depictions of America during the first decades of his career. Despite the fact that the technical know-how associated with colour photography had existed for many decades, until the mid 1970s monochrome photography was the international medium *de rigueur* for serious photography, whether journalistic or in the realm of high art. Colour photography, on the other hand, was associated with the superficial imagery of advertising. This perception changed, however, when the works of American photographers such as William Eggleston (b.1939) were championed by luminary figures like John Szarkowski, the Director of Photography at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Given the extent to which Japanese photographers were aware of international developments, particularly in America, it is difficult to discount the fact that the newfound international respect for colour had some influence on Tōmatsu's change.

While it is likely that each of the factors outlined above played some role in Tōmatsu's decision to begin making photographic images in colour, based on the images and accompanying text presented in *Taiyō no enpitsu*, the predominant motivator seems to have been his visceral experiences of Okinawa's natural beauty. To some extent, as a languid and aesthetic island space that provided an escape from the rationalised and fast paced spaces of modernity, Okinawa represented a kind of 'authenticity' for Tōmatsu. The island lifestyle was not only modernity's sensory obverse, but also its cultural other. Okinawa represented an imagined Japanese originary culture and lifestyle, 'a good culture that Japan discarded in its haste to achieve modernity.'[397]

Significantly, Tōmatsu's shift to colour seems to have coincided also with a shift to a medium format camera, where 'medium format' refers to the size of the negative used. The rough aesthetic that characterises much of his earlier black and white work is likely to be attributable to the use of a camera that produces negative images captured initially within a 36 by 24 millimetre rectangle and

[397] Tōmatsu, cited in ibid., 186.

that are then later enlarged to print size. The colour images in *Taiyō no enpitsu*, on the other hand, are likely to have been taken with a camera that produces square 60 by 60 millimetre frames – a format that, as discussed in chapter five, was also used by Suda – resulting in an image that is more than four times the surface area of a 36 by 24 millimetre negative. This shift to a larger medium is evidenced by the square format of each of the colour photographs in the book and particularly by the increase in image clarity. The extra resolution enables the photographer to capture a wider gamut of colour and tone, allowing better technical depiction of the rich colours and visual contrasts of Okinawa's natural spaces.

As noted, Tōmatsu's shift to colour and higher resolution seems to have occurred partway through the production of the images in *Taiyō no enpitsu*. As a result, most of the material that depicts Okinawa Prefecture in this collection is in monochrome. There are, nevertheless, a number of colour images of the island chain. While some depict natural and rural spaces, interestingly there are several images of the main island of Okinawa where the US military presence is concentrated. The following (figure 3) is an example.

Figure 3: "Naha" from *Taiyō no enpitsu* (*The Pencil of the Sun*) by Tōmatsu Shōmei, 1975.

Here the vibrant tonal pallet one might normally associate with the depiction of the natural spaces of Okinawa is applied to what could otherwise be an unremarkable quotidian scene in Naha, Okinawa Prefecture's capital. The golden light transforms the drab, utilitarian buildings that provide the backdrop for a casual twilight game of baseball into a sensory experience. Visual drama is added by the contrast between the oranges of the concrete building and the purples of the sky. The depiction of urban landscape in this way is significant in that it breaks down polarised notions between urban and natural space, the former the problematic centre of modernity (and thus Americanisation), the latter an escape from this centre. This suggests an overlap between these two aspects, the natural world and the urban, rather than positing a simplistic binary of technology/nature.

On balance, however, *Taiyō no enpitsu* focuses on the rural and natural spaces of Okinawa and the people who occupy those spaces, which are largely depicted as sites in which activities such as fishing are being undertaken (as in figure 2) or in which traditional cultural practices are being observed. One notable exception to this is the following image (figure 4), in which the island chain's natural space is represented as a purely visual sensory experience.

Figure 4: "Tokashiki" from *Taiyō no enpitsu* (*The Pencil of the Sun*) by Tōmatsu Shōmei, 1975.

It is interesting to compare this scene to the three-framed scene of United States military activity that was the first image discussed in this chapter (figure 1), taken from the photographer's earlier book on Okinawa. In that image, Okinawa's verdant forest operated merely as a backdrop for military activity and the explosion of a US military device. Here, the forest landscape has shifted from

backdrop to main subject with its sense of abundance enhanced by the use of colour and higher resolution film. As the caption indicates, the photograph was taken on Tokashiki, one of Okinawa Prefecture's then more peripheral islands (the island now has a significant tourist industry). Not only is there no American presence in this scene, in a relatively uncharacteristic move, Tōmatsu has constructed the image without any trace of human presence whatsoever. In fact, the forested landscape is arguably framed without any anchoring features at all. In this way the impression is created of being confronted with what might be referred to as 'the sublime,' an experience of nature as endless and mysterious, but also as restorative, particularly to the damaged spirit of the modern subject. Perhaps above all others in *Taiyō no enpitsu*, this image expresses a primal desire to return to origins, to nature as it existed, pure and unsullied, before the advent of human civilisation.

While the human presence breaks the impact of the natural as absolute, a similar feeling of return to origin is elicited in the next image (figure 5), taken in Kurima, another relatively remote island.

Figure 5: "Kurima" from *Taiyō no enpitsu* (*The Pencil of the Sun*) by Tōmatsu Shōmei, 1975.

This photograph is the first of the colour images taken in Okinawa, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia that make up the latter part of the book. This editorial choice is revealing as it strongly suggests that Tōmatsu at this time framed his journeys to Okinawa *and* Southeast Asia as a return to Japan's origins. It is understandable that Tōmatsu perceived Southeast Asia in a similar manner to Okinawa. Not only was the region relatively less economically developed than Japan, Yanagita's theory of national origin held that Okinawan society was, in fact, the result of migration from Southeast Asia. The 'return to origins' impression given by the photograph is a result of the fact that the woman walks away from the camera (and away from the modern photographer) through lush greenery towards the near horizon line that divides the frame horizontally. Beyond the horizon the vast forest is blurred and distant, a nondescript and sublime space. Unlike the previous landscape, in this image the figure of the woman fills the centre ground.

Nevertheless, there are no other markers of civilization and, in common with the previous image (figure 4) the lack of context, the fertility suggested by the abundance greenery, and the positioning of the camera behind the human figure of the woman creates a sense that we are in a prehistoric landscape. If not for her relatively modern clothing, the photograph would exclude all sense of temporal contingency. The woman, nevertheless, belongs to the modern era, and her journey into wilderness seems analogous with Jacques Derrida's argument regarding the modern longing for self-effacement, as discussed in chapter five. In the historical context of Okinawa, we might additionally attribute this sense of longing to a desire for spiritual and physical restoration from the damage wrought upon the island chain by exploitative imperialism and war. There is, furthermore, an interesting comparison that can be made between this scene and that of the leftmost image in the sequence from *Okinawa, Okinawa, Okinawa* discussed above (figure 1). That photograph depicted American soldiers headed towards similarly dense forest. However, in that image, any entry into the forest was of necessity an act of forced penetration. Here, however, the landscape seems to welcome – we might even say embrace – the woman.

The above two photographs (figures 4 and 5) demonstrate an idea of Okinawa as an island paradise subtly different to that of popular discourses. They reflect a desire to go beyond what we might think of as a pastoral existence, the experience of a culture less 'developed' and thus less beholden to the pressures of modern time and the hollowness of consumer culture, towards an unadulterated communion with nature in which the mediating effect of culture is minimised. When viewing images such as these from *Taiyō no enpitsu*, it is tempting to assume that Tōmatsu held a one dimensional, idealised view of Okinawa's outer islands. Yet, just as he knew all too well the problems of American occupation of the main islands, he was also aware of the legacies of war and how endemic poverty beset the peripheral Okinawan space in the 1970s.

With this understanding on the part of the photographer in mind, we can begin to discern other aspects of the image depicted in figure 5 that undermine too straightforward a 'return to origins' reading. For instance, although we are

unable to see her features, from the colour of her hair, pose of her hips, and the hang of her arms, the woman in the photograph seems old enough to have experienced war firsthand and to have suffered trauma from this experience. Probably a local resident, her plain attire and bare feet might suggest a simple life connected to nature, but are also likely to be markers of relative poverty. In the commentary provided in *Taiyō no enpitsu*, Tōmatsu demonstrates awareness of Okinawa Prefecture's hardships by including two quotations from residents of Miyako, a larger island very close to Kurima Island where this photograph was taken. One resident declares bitterly that 'Miyako Island is so impoverished that all they can do is eat potato or porridge, their faces are swollen from malnutrition and some are dying of starvation.'[398] The other recounts sexual abuse as a child, concluding that 'there is no place as ugly as this village…it is mistaken to think this is a beautiful haven.'[399] Considered in this light, the viewer of the image is reminded of the way Okinawa embodied many things for Tōmatsu and that while he may have longed for the islands to act as an idyllic counter-modern space, he could not ignore the way in which the islands were emblematic of a number of highly negative aspects of America's postwar domination of Japan, while also being oppressed by inequitable relations with the mainland.

Surrealism and the Primitive: Okinawan and Japanese Identities

Tōmatsu's complex perspective of Okinawa is often represented in his images through an indefinable strangeness or 'uncanniness,' a surreal aspect that at times unsettles the viewer. While this element undermines too simplistic an idealisation of the region, it also indicates a distance between himself as modern (photographing) subject and the natural/traditional (photographable) spaces that seemed to offer such hope for a more meaningful existence. The following passage from *Taiyō no enpitsu* is particularly revealing in that it well conveys how Tōmatsu struggled to overcome the ingrained patterns of modernity. Ultimately, in Okinawa he was in a liminal state, unable to fully accommodate

[398] *Taiyō no enpitsu : Okinawa, umi to sora to shima to hitobito soshite tōnan ajia e / Tōmatsu Shōmei = the Pencil of the Sun, Okinawa & S.E.Asia / by Shomei Tomatsu, n.p.g.*
[399] *Ibid.*

himself to the more natural rhythms of life that operated outside a 'centre' metropolis:

> Observing the time of day, I realise another day has passed me by. Somewhere in between being free and otherwise, I am neither happy, nor unhappy. My life in this island seems to me that of too much comfort. I shall return to Tokyo![400]

As demonstrated in previous chapters, this divide between a modern and less modern way of life can be difficult to overcome for someone who has only known an urban life. Although Tōmatsu was conscious of Okinawa's contemporary situation, this inability to negotiate the urban centre/rural periphery divide sometimes lead to an objectification of the natural landscape in his work and also of the people featured in it.

There is an important connection to be drawn at this juncture between surrealism and ideas of 'the primitive' most notably demonstrated by the primitivist art movement in early twentieth century Europe. This movement was comprised of artists who, disillusioned with the superficial aesthetics of modernity, sought to express an authentic humanity by introducing 'primitive' motifs into their work.[401] James Clifford has noted how cultural artefacts from places such as Africa and Polynesia fascinated artists such as Pablo Picasso, André Derain, and Henri Matisse.[402] These artists valued not just the aesthetic qualities, but also the ethnographers' claims that the artefacts were instantiations of primordial humanity, humanity prior to the advent of developed society and centralised governance. In Clifford's view, primitivism was simply another articulation of a propensity in Western ethnography to conceive of anything designated as 'primitive' as belonging to a separate temporal reality.[403] As already discussed in relation to Hamaya's *Yukiguni* (chapter four) Johannes Fabian has described this tendency as a 'denial of coevalness'; ethnographers

[400] *Ibid.*
[401] Walther F. Ingo, *Art of the 20th Century* (Los Angeles: Taschen, 2000), 420-1.
[402] James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 189-214.
[403] Ibid.

understood 'primitive' or 'tribal' peoples not as agentic members of present global society but as artefacts of a bygone era, a remaining fragment of a lost, primordial humanity.[404] This attitude, of course, effaces the subjectivity of those posited as 'primitive' and/or 'tribal'. Clifford argues that ultimately the hypostatised 'primitive', whether people, objects, or cultures, is not the neat and bounded category that it is claimed to be. Instead the so-called 'primitive' is comprised of 'an incoherent cluster of qualities that at different times have been used to construct a source, origin, or alter ego confirming some new "discovery" within the territory of the Western self.'[405]

In Tōmatsu's case, we might substitute Clifford's 'Western self' with the 'modern self,' particularly in light of his interest in anthropology. In relation to anthropology, not only did Tōmatsu have an interest in Yanagita's Okinawa work, he had also read the work of influential mid twentieth century theorists such as Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908-2009) and Clifford Geertz (1926-2006).[406] It is also possible that Tōmatsu was influenced by discourses about the ethnic origins of Japanese people which, in postwar anthropological thought, had shifted from a notion of mixed to singular ethnic origins. Oguma writes that two key proponents of this theory were Watsuji Tetsuo (1889-1960), an influential philosopher with a strong interest in ethics and Japanese culture, and Hasebe Kotondo (1882-1969), a pathologist, professor at Tokyo University, and 'the supreme Japanese authority in anthropology.'[407] Hasebe's thesis of 'Akashi Man' was particularly influential in postwar discourses around national origins and identity because it offered an alternative national polity theory to that propagated by the wartime state (which is discussed in the introductory chapter).[408] Hasebe based his analysis on plaster casts of human bones first unearthed in 1931 but destroyed during the US bombing raids of 1945. Hasebe

[404] Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object*, 25-35.
[405] Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*, 212.
[406] Koji Taki, "Traces of Traces," in *Traces, 50 Years of Tōmatsu's Works*, ed. Sumiyo Mitsuhashi Atsuyuki Nakahara (Tokyo: Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, 1999), 179.
[407] Oguma, *A Genealogy of 'Japanese' Self-Images*, 305.
[408] Ibid.

discovered the plaster casts made from the destroyed remains in a Tokyo classroom, and published an article based on his analysis entitled '*Nihon minzoku no seiritsu'* ('The Birth of the Japanese Nation').[409] Previously there had been no evidence of human inhabitation of Japan during the Palaeolithic era, and so Japan's origins were thought to be a mix of different ethnicities that had migrated to the archipelago over time, eventually overpowering a small indigenous population. Hasebe argued, instead, that 'Akashi Man' had existed first and that, although there had been migration, the dominant ethnicity had always derived from this Palaeolithic ancestor.[410] While 'Akashi Man' had originally migrated from Southern China before the land connection between the two receded, Hasebe contended that once the Japanese archipelago became geographically isolated, 'the descendants of this people multiplied in their peaceful utopia, Japan, which was blessed with the products of the mountains and the seas. This situation lasted until the present, and produced the Japanese.'[411] Tōmatsu's images discussed thus far are not taken in mainland Japan and so to some extent present a different image to that constructed by Hasebe. Nevertheless, it was clear that Tōmatsu had found in Okinawa a kind of 'peaceful utopia' similar to that theorised by Hasebe.

If the above images (figures 4 and 5) to some extent suggest a precivilisational oasis recalling Hasebe's 'peaceful utopia,' it seems that Tōmatsu also had a deep interest in and was drawn to photograph the traditional cultural practices of Okinawa. This preoccupation is evident in the sheer number of images in *Taiyō no enpitsu* that depict traditional artefacts or religious practices. This is not to imply a clear attempt at ethnographic documentation in the collection such as occurs in Hamaya's *Yukiguni*. In fact, Tōmatsu has denied any explicit motives towards 'ethnographic description,' a denial that is largely confirmed by the absence of clear narrative in the *Taiyō no enpitsu* images and also by the lack of descriptive details in the captions.[412] Reynolds argues however, that this very

[409] Ibid., 306.
[410] Ibid., 306-7.
[411] Hasebe, cited in ibid., 307.
[412] Reynolds, *Allegories of Time and Space: Japanese Identity in Photography and Architecture*, 182.

lack of a conventional ethnographic mode of presentation in fact 'tends to enhance [Tōmatsu's] subjects' mystery or exoticism.'[413] We might view the rather uncanny image below as representative of the 'mystery' or 'exoticism' to which Reynolds refers (figure 6).

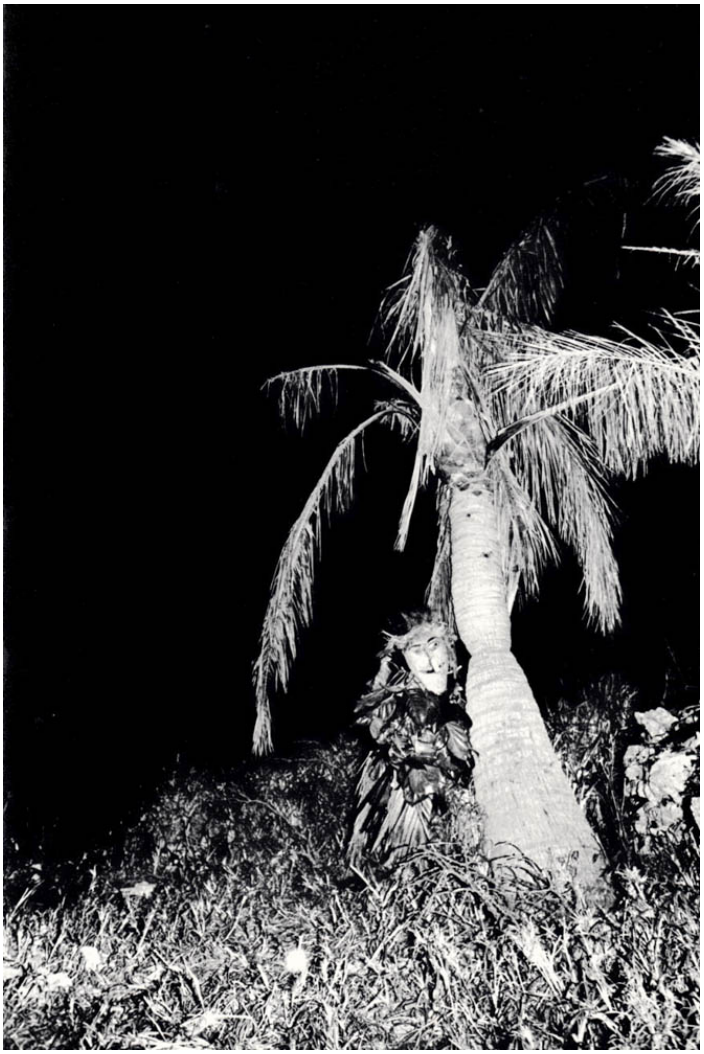

Figure 6: "Hateruma" from *Taiyō no enpitsu* (*The Pencil of the Sun*) by Tōmatsu Shōmei, 1975.

This photograph well exemplifies the way in which primitive and surreal often converge in the *Taiyō no enpitsu* photo series. The primitive is symbolised by the mask and costume of palm leaves that adorn the central figure, which is captured out of any context of traditional ceremony and which merely emerges, somewhat discomfortingly, from the natural surrounds. Like the early twentieth century

[413] Ibid.

surrealists, the absence of context creates a universal sense of primitiveness or the primal which, rather than being tied to any one culture, is seen as a fundamental element of humanity. The prominence of the flash reminds us of Naitō's similar use of this device, in particular how the harsh light of the flash almost bleaches out the details of the scene. The palm tree in particular appears ghost-like, with the intensity of the flash producing the evocative blackness of background that signifies folkloric Japan. We might also draw comparison to Suda, although his use of the flash is more subtle and rarely results in a similarly dramatic effect. There is also a comparison to be made with Hamaya's photograph of the rice harvest that was discussed in chapter four (figure 7 in that chapter). Like those two human figures, the main subject of Tōmatsu's image is similarly ensconced in, indeed in this case made up by, the grass and foliage of the natural landscape, signifying an inextricability from the natural world. The surreal nature of the figure is heightened by the fact that, although seemingly connected to local Okinawan culture, it is unclear whether the image depicts a local person in costume or an artificially constructed figure that is perhaps some sort of icon. This resulting ambiguity may be unsettling for the modern viewer who is used to certainty and a singular representation of reality in the image being viewed.

The association of strangeness and the primitive also connects the above image (figure 6) with the theories of Jōmon culture that were promoted in the postwar era by Japanese sculptor Okamoto Tarō (1911-1996). As Reynolds explains, in 1952 Okamoto published an influential essay that came to be regarded as 'nothing short of a frontal assault on prevailing assumptions about Japanese aesthetics.'[414] In the essay Okamoto presented his argument for an idea of Japanese culture predicated on the rough, wild aesthetics of Jōmon pottery. The Jōmon period of Japanese history is usually dated between 1,200 and 800 BCE. The way of life in this era was understood by Okamoto to have been that of nomadic hunter-gatherers whose lifeworld was steeped in magic.[415] Reynolds outlines how Okamoto interpreted the wild and disturbing aesthetic he

[414] Ibid., 55.
[415] Ibid., 67.

perceived in the Jōmon sculptures as 'an adventurous expression of a people on the move.'[416] Based on Okamoto's own past reading of Japanese and European ethnographic literature,[417] he speculated that the Jōmon society could not have survived in their struggle with the landscape without a deep belief in 'a mysterious spiritual world based on magic.'[418] It was Okamoto's view that this type of spirituality lent the Jōmon ceramics the strangeness that was a key element in a new understanding of Japanese cultural identity in the postwar. There is little doubt, moreover, that this new understanding was influenced, perhaps mutually, by the prevailing discourses discussed above related to 'Akashi Man.' The strangeness that Okamoto so prized is, in fact, likely to have also been connected to his interactions with the surrealist movement. Okamoto lived in Paris between 1929 and 1940, during which time he met key figures of surrealism, and, like them, took classes in philosophy, ethnography, and sociology at the Sorbonne.

Okamoto's conception of Jōmon aesthetics was posited in opposition to that of the Yayoi period, the agrarian era that succeeded the Jōmon. The Yayoi aesthetic is more in line with that commonly attributed to Japan, based on the concepts of *wabi* ('rustic simplicity'), *sabi* ('appreciation for the worn or aged'), and *shibumi* ('quiet or subdued elegance').[419] The austere values associated with these concepts came to be linked with the Samurai class and were eventually rigidly espoused by the wartime regime.[420] For Okamoto, the predominance of these concepts in postwar discourses reflected 'a slave-like feudal attachment' to the hegemonic power of the elite.[421] Jōmon culture, on the other hand, was that of the common people. The archaeological relics associated with the Jōmon period allowed a visceral connection to an ancestral past disconnected from wartime ultranationalist foundational myths surrounding the Emperor.

[416] Okamoto, cited in ibid.
[417] Ibid., 56.
[418] Ibid., 67.
[419] Here I borrow Reynolds' translation of the terms. See ibid., 65.
[420] Ibid., 64.
[421] Okamoto, cited in ibid.

Although it is unclear the extent to which Tōmatsu was aware of the discussion around the idea of Jōmon culture as a new basis for cultural identity, we could assume that its iconoclastic nature might have appealed to him. The image made of carved mask and palm leaves in figure 6 conjures the strange and wild aesthetic Okamoto prized in Jōmon ceramics. Similarly, the notion of identity not rooted in Meiji era ideology but instead in premodern time is also likely to have appealed to someone like Tōmatsu who was so often critical of postwar Japanese society. While this new idea of cultural identity may have appeared to be a hopeful deviation from entrenched traditional notions, it is important to note that this thesis of Japanese identity was predicated on archaeological relics. In other words, on material objects and not, as in the case of Okinawa, on living people and culture. Despite, as noted, Tōmatsu's deep empathy for the historical and contemporary plight of Okinawa, and his self-awareness of his own position as a mainland Japanese vis-à-vis the historical power imbalance between mainland Japan and Okinawa, there are occasional moments in *Taiyō no enpitsu* where it is possible to discern the association of modern Okinawans with the primitive. This is observable in the following juxtaposing of images in the book (figure 7).

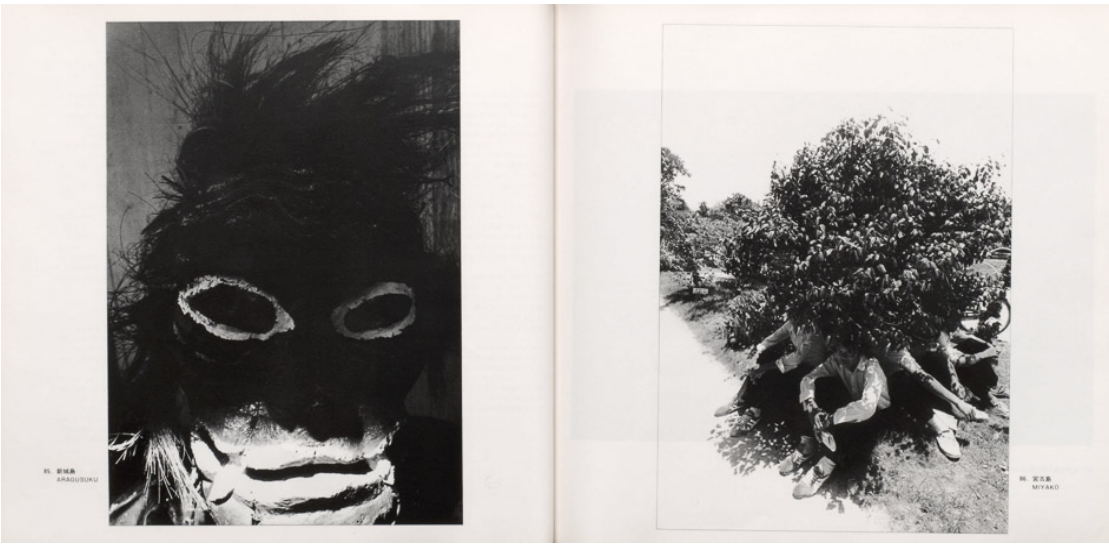

Figure 7: "Aragusuku" and "Miyako" from *Taiyō no enpitsu* (*The Pencil of the Sun*) by Tōmatsu Shōmei, 1975.

The mask in the left-hand photograph appears to have been carved roughly from wood, producing a formal aesthetic comparable to that of Jōmon ceramics. There is also a sense of dark magic (perhaps Okamoto's Jōmon magic), an aspect which is attributable, much like the previous image (figure 6), to the skilful use of shadow. Here, however, the shadow operates not to obscure the surrounding context, but instead to obscure the details of the mask. As a result, in this dark region only the white outlines of the eyes are visible. The intense white of the lips is a product of the thin stream of sunlight that illuminates the bottom of the photograph. Perhaps even more than the previous image (figure 6), this photograph symbolises the primitive that was idealised both by European surrealists and by Okamoto. The image at right, moreover, is seemingly selected for its visual parity with that on the left, particularly in the way that the foliage of the tree resembles the tuft of hair attached to the top of the mask. Even more striking is the similar manner in which the use of shadow in the right-hand photograph works to obscure the features of the young men sitting below the foliage. The manner in which the men are crammed beneath the tree branches, presumably to escape the harsh sun, creates a visual impression of them as the tree's roots. This makes them seem part of nature. Despite the fact that their clothing is clearly modern, their juxtaposition against the mask at left suggests some connection between the young Okinawans and the primitive.

The above depiction of the primitive in conjunction with the people of Okinawa is a relatively rare occurrence in *Taiyō no enpitsu*. Yet, its appearance speaks to the way in which certain pervasive discourses can find their way into the cultural production even of an artist such as Tōmatsu whose depiction of Okinawa is generally highly nuanced. It will therefore be helpful to investigate the particular discourses that constructed Okinawans as primitive and thus inferior.

The perception of Okinawa as somehow lacking the same potential as mainland Japan can be traced back to the early days of the modern Japanese state, and was largely predicated on ideas of modern progress. Wendy Matsumura notes how the Japanese state justified its formal annexation of the Ryukyu Islands on the pretext that the highly exploitative systems of agrarian labour in existence at

that time constituted premodern 'barbarism.'[422] This is despite the fact that this situation was at least in part a result of pre-existent taxation and tributary arrangements with the Satsuma regime in southern Japan. As a result of this arrangement, the Satsuma domain (ostensibly part of the central Tokugawa state) 'established monopolistic control over the kingdom's key commodities like brown sugar, turmeric, and woven cloth.'[423] This brought about structural changes in agrarian relations that, coupled with the Ryukyu regime's extant exploitative practices, led to local farmers becoming so heavily indebted they were 'transformed into serfs.'[424]

It was this situation that the nascent Meiji regime proposed to amend by incorporating the region into the modern Japanese state. The problem was identified as a general backwardness of culture, which could be remedied through the 'enlightenment and civilization' that the Meiji government's 'Preservation Policy' would bring to Okinawa.[425] Matsuda Mariachi (1832-1882), a Home Ministry official in the Meiji government, described the Okinawans in this way: 'the indigenous people are not educated, very few of them can read or write, they wear frayed clothing, walk barefoot, live in huts and sleep and sit on earth floors – they are quite barbaric…they tend to be old fashioned, stubborn, and resistant to new ways.'[426] Matsumura argues that this kind of description played on a long running discourse that established difference between Okinawa and the mainland in order to justify policies advantageous to the Japanese state:

> The state's explanation that the role of the Preservation Policy was simply to protect the Okinawan community ensured that whatever material transformations took place in the prefecture, its difference could be explained away as a result of the collective backwardness of the long-standing customs and culture of its people rather than the outcome of

[422] Wendy Matsumura, *The Limits of Okinawa: Japanese Capitalism, Living Labor, and Theorizations of Community*, ed. Michael Dutton Rey Chow, H.D. Harootunian, and Rosalind C. Morris, Asia Pacific: Culture, Politics, and Society (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2015), 40-1.
[423] Ibid., 30.
[424] Ibid., 30-1.
[425] Ibid., 41.
[426] Matsuda, cited in ibid.

> struggle between preexisting socioeconomic structures and the nascent capitalist state.[427]

Despite the stated intention to alleviate the suffering caused by highly exploitative labour arrangements, conditions worsened, particularly for those in the brown sugar industry that had become an extremely lucrative commodity for Japanese capital.[428]

The depiction of Okinawans in this way was still evident in popular discourse several decades later. Davinder Bhowmik outlines a telling example in the work of Hirotsu Kazuo, a prominent Tokyo-born critic and writer in the 1920s. Hirotsu's story, *The Wandering Ryukyuan,* depicts the relationship between Mikaeru, an Okinawan man, and a mainland writer known only as H who is presumed to represent the author himself. Mikaeru is portrayed as an untrustworthy trickster and described in bestial terms; for instance 'his bear-like laugh, his dark, hairy body and prowling nature [that] turn[s] him into a menacing presence.'[429] Generally, the relationship between H and Mikaeru is presented as the mainlander's paternalistic efforts to civilise his willing Okinawan pupil; however the story implies that this endeavour is ultimately futile given the indelible fact of Mikaeru's Okinawan blood.[430]

It is clear that on a conscious level Tōmatsu did not perceive the Okinawans as pejoratively animalistic or socioeconomically retrograde. Many images in *Taiyō no enpitsu* in fact reflect an idealisation of the simplicity derided by Matsuda in the quote above, an idealisation that, it should be noted, is itself paradoxically pejorative in its capacity as a 'positive' stereotype. Yet it is nonetheless important to consider this work in the context of the discourses described above. This is not in any way to colour Tōmatsu's work as derogatory, but to return attention again to the extent to which, in spite of his relatively enlightened

[427] Ibid., 45.
[428] Ibid., 46-7.
[429] Davinder L. Bhowmik, *Writing Okinawa: Narrative Acts of Identity and Resistance*, ed. Mark Selden, Asia's Transformation (New York: Routledge, 2008), 60.
[430] Ibid., 56,59-60.

attitudes, the photographer remained entrenched in the structures and associated discourses of Japan's mainland society. These discourses are inextricably tied to modern conceptions of progress and coalesce with a nostalgic view of the rural periphery that is largely an expression of discontent with teleological modernity. It is thus unsurprising that there has been a propensity among those, including Tōmatsu, who create cultural representations of Okinawa to focus on the spaces outside the region's urban centres. With special reference to ethnography, James Roberson has identified this inordinate focus on traditional culture and social relations as a phenomenon observable in the choice of sites made by both Japanese and non-Japanese. Robertson concludes that the selection of 'non-urban, non-military base related or non-resort area field sites is still too common among both Japanese and non-Japanese ethnographers apparently looking for "authentic" Okinawan traditions and social relations.'[431]

Between Modernity and Tradition, Urban and Rural.

In Tōmatsu's case, it is important to understand how his own search for authenticity in Okinawa was deeply motivated by a perception of mainstream society in postwar Japan as inextricably bound up with the Americanisation of his country. Here we might compare him with Yanagita, the ethnographer whose sympathetic depiction of Okinawa so inspired Tōmatsu's encounters with the region. Over time Yanagita shifted from believing that Japan's cultural origins could be found in the mountains (a theory in which his *Tales of Tōno* was so central) towards the idea of Japan as an island nation. Oguma argues that this shift, which also meant a shift from the idea of mixed ethnicity to that of homogeneity, was attributable more than anything to Yanagita's encounter with the West in his capacity as an elite Japanese government bureaucrat. In 1921 Yanagita was Japan's representative to the meeting of the League of Nations Mandate Commission held in Geneva, Switzerland. Oguma recounts how Yanagita, with limited conversational capacity in English and relatively slow reading ability, had felt like an outlier, 'a country bumpkin' completely out of his

[431] James Roberson, "Portraying Okinawa in Postwar Ethnographic Writing: A Critical Review of the English-Language Literature," *Asian Anthropology* 14, no. 2 (2015): 191.

depth in an environment where the French and British in particular exhibited 'severe racial discrimination' towards non-Europeans.[432] This humiliating experience led him to identify with the South Sea Islanders whose region was the topic of negotiations at this event. As Oguma writes:

> In the past, Yanagita had laid greater stress on mountains as the periphery than on islands, and had regarded Japan and himself as the centre. However, through his experience in Geneva, he came to portray Japan not as an empire that includes 'mountains' within her borders, but as a tiny 'island' oppressed by the West. This corresponded to the change in his own status from a high-ranking bureaucrat who interacted with the regions ('mountains') from a central position of power, to a 'country bumpkin' mocked by European culture.[433]

Oguma further argues that Yanagita's experience foreshadowed an overall tendency in postwar Japan to see the country as a peaceful and isolated island nation unsuited to the tribulations of international relations, as opposed to the aggressive Empire of the past.[434]

While Tōmatsu was not in a position of bureaucratic power comparable to that of Yanagita, he was an urbanite who enjoyed considerable status and some institutional power as one of Japan's leading photographers. Contra Yanagita, however, it seems clear he did not consider himself aligned with the powerful 'centre' but an outlier within it, and so perhaps already predisposed to emphasise with the peripheral status of Okinawa. There are, however, strong parallels between Yanagita's sense of humiliation and disempowerment in his encounter with European power and Tōmatsu's experience of war, defeat, and Occupation (we can assume this must also have been Yanagita's own experience in the postwar era). Tōmatsu in essence saw mainland Japan as symbolising disempowerment at the hands of the West. Okinawa, in particular its peripheral areas, became for him the repository of the idea of Japan that had emerged in the postwar. In Oguma's words, this ideal postwar Japan was: 'an isolated, remote

[432] Oguma, *A Genealogy of 'Japanese' Self-Images*, 182-3.
[433] Ibid., 184-5.
[434] Ibid., 316.

and peaceful nation, in which an homogenous nation had lived from time immemorial, while the "Japanese" were viewed as children of nature, an agricultural people with no experience of dealing with alien nations and lacking in skills of both war and diplomacy.'[435] Although naïve and possibly chauvinistic, this perception of the nation was as much motivated by the traumatic experience of war as chauvinism. Like Yanagita, Tōmatsu's idyllic portrayal of Okinawa might best be understood as 'generated by a heart in search of peace.'[436]

As many of the images discussed thus far in the chapter reveal, however, it was no easy thing for Tōmatsu to find the entirely pure sense of peace for which he seemed to yearn. We might attribute this difficulty not only to the intractability of the modern worldview that had to some extent shaped him, but also to his personal experiences of war and occupation that, no matter how far he ventured from the bases, were difficult to put aside in the Okinawan context. It is these two factors that perhaps most strongly differentiate Tōmatsu's portrayal of Okinawa Prefecture from those that are simply either polemics on the American occupation or else uncritical reifications of the island chain's natural spaces and traditional cultures. Instead, a dissonance permeates *Taiyō no enpitsu* that, even given the idyllic nature of some of the collection's representations, reminds us of a darkness that besets Okinawa. An example is the following image (figure 8) of dead fieldmice or similar vermin. This photograph was taken in Miyako where, as noted above, Tōmatsu was exposed to the hardships of life for some in Okinawa's peripheral islands.

[435] Ibid.
[436] Ibid., 202.

Figure 8: "Miyako" from *Taiyō no enpitsu* (*The Pencil of the Sun*) by Tōmatsu Shōmei, 1975.

If an image of so many dead mice is not striking enough, the strong tonal contrast provides considerable additional power. It might have been possible to photograph this subject in a softer way through the use of more diffuse lighting, resulting in an alternate reading that, for example, could have reminded the viewer that death is part of the natural rhythm of nature. However, a number of photographic strategies, including the use of the harsh sunlight and the overhead perspective, produce a jarring effect that leads the viewer to speculate on what might have caused death on such a large scale. The paucity of grass intimates drought and famine, yet it might also be poisoning, either deliberate or the result of pollution. Regardless of what caused the rodents' demise, the allusion to disaster simultaneously reminds us of economic hardship, and, metaphorically, the ravaged and corpse-strewn battlefields of the American invasion. The photograph is inserted in sequence between two relatively quotidian and almost idyllic images in the book and thereby disrupts any complacent idealisation of Okinawa.

The following image (figure 9) operates in a similar, but more subtle, manner by adding a surreal touch to the depiction of traditional practice in Okinawa.

Figure 9: “Iriomote” from *Taiyō no enpitsu* (*The Pencil of the Sun*) by Tōmatsu Shōmei, 1975.

Despite being captured in the process of walking, the main figure seems largely static, an effect that is perhaps enhanced by the lack of discernable features: the only recognisably human elements are the hands, which emerge from the garment’s white sleeves. The solid black colouring of the attire, and the unusual way that it hangs, also serve to obscure features that might otherwise signify a human body. This black figure is transposed against a bleached white background, which is largely devoid of detail, in a way that makes it seem to float against the landscape. The whiteness of the sky bleeds onto the top of the head section of the garment, adding an otherworldly glow. These visual effects, in combination with the anonymity of the figure, create a sense of distance that suggests the alienation of the photographer from subject. The low angle from

which this image has been shot augments this impression while also constructing the figure as mildly intimidating. The image ultimately suggests that the promise of belonging offered by lost traditions is as ephemeral as any connection to nature for the subject who has been changed so fundamentally by modern experience.

Conclusion

Tōmatsu's representation of Okinawa's natural spaces in *Taiyō no enpitsu* is a suitably complex and nuanced depiction of a region whose position in relation to Japan has always been at best liminal. As a result, it is much more difficult in Okinawa to produce the kind of uncomplicated depiction of the rural as that which appears in Hamaya's *Yukiguni* series (chapter four). As an urbanised mainlander, Tōmatsu approached the region with a perspective that was informed by broader discourses, but one tempered by an understanding of his own position of relative power as a result of those discourses. *Taiyō no enpitsu* is thus an ambiguous portrayal of the region that resonates with familiar themes, including the idea of natural space as a culturally restorative place of origin or even as representative of a primordial time before culture. This perspective, however, is indicative of a perception on the part of the photographer that is unavoidably steeped in modern, teleological time. On several occasions, this leads to an unfortunate objectification of Okinawans in Tōmatsu's images in a way that resonates with inequitable discourses of the past. These instances, however, are comparatively rare. Rather, the *Taiyō no enpitsu* photographs generally evoke a tension that suggests Tōmatsu's own liminal status in between the rationalising structures of the modern mainland and the more fluid rhythms of Okinawa's peripheral spaces. Equally as pronounced is the ambiguity created by the tensions between the restorative powers of Okinawan landscape and culture, the continuing echoes of war trauma, and the knowledge of Okinawa's ongoing subjugation to American and mainland Japanese interests. In this way, even the seemingly untouched regions of Okinawa Prefecture appear as nebulous sites that resist simple reification.

CHAPTER SEVEN:

Allegories of American Power: Ambiguous Encounters in Tōmatsu Shōmei's *Chewing Gum and Chocolate*

Introduction

The same dissatisfaction with Japan's postwar modernity that drove the photographic projects of Takanashi, Naitō, Hamaya, Suda, and Tōmatsu's *Taiyō no enpitsu* also lies behind the series *Chewing Gum and Chocolate*, Tōmatsu's posthumously published monograph that is the subject of analysis in this chapter. Rather than seeking an alternative world in Okinawa's peripheral spaces as he did in *Taiyō no enpitsu*, however, here Tōmatsu confronts the fact of America directly in images of American base towns in Japan. The *Chewing Gum and Chocolate* monograph was not published until 2014, two years after Tōmatsu's death. Although not directly involved in the editing or publishing, the photographer was enthusiastic about the publication of the volume and even chose the *Chewing Gum and Chocolate* title himself.[437] Although many of the images included had appeared earlier in magazines, monographs and exhibitions, this was the first collection that focused solely on base town representations. The collection is largely comprised of photographs taken in two distinct periods, between 1959 and 1960 during his travels to base towns in mainland Japan, and in 1969 during an extended stay in Okinawa.[438]

In one sense, Tōmatsu's title signals concerns that a shallow culture of fleeting consumerist pleasures had supplanted older and more meaningful cultures specific to Japan. This is the same shallow culture that Takanashi depicted in 1960s Tokyo and which the Swiss-American photographer Robert Frank portrayed in his *The Americans* photobook (as discussed in chapter two). It is also

[437] Leo Rubinfien and John Junkerman, ed. *Chewing Gum and Chocolate: Photographs by Shōmei Tōmatsu* (New York: Aperture, 2014), 223.
[438] Ibid., 210.

the culture that drove Naitō, Hamaya, and Suda (chapters three, four, and five respectively) to seek, in different ways, alternatives in Japan's putative premodernity. Yet, in the same way that Tōmatsu's depiction of Okinawa's natural and rural spaces in *Taiyō no enpitsu* went beyond a simplistic depiction of a 'lost' Japan, his *Chewing Gum and Chocolate* series goes well beyond a one dimensional critique of a shallow America. In resisting either a simple demarcation of victim and oppressor or the depiction of a monolithic 'America' in Japan, the collection provides a sense of the complex relations of power that marked the country's defeat and occupation.

The complexity of Tōmatsu's photographic responses to Americanisation in Japan can be traced to his formative experiences of the America Occupation, an event that while characterised by altruism was also principally an exercise in control. In the postwar period, contact with the military bases impressed upon many Japanese the abundance of American life and the deprivations that had been imposed on Japan by the wartime regime. Tōmatsu himself came to this understanding directly after the arrival of United States troops. As he observed:

> The shortage of food was especially painful for rapidly growing children. However, supplies were abundant on the other side of the metal fences and barbed wire that surrounded the U.S. base. The U.S. side looked bright, like heaven, while on this side, there was hell as we struggled with starvation and poverty. When a child with an empty stomach held out his hand, a GI gave chewing gum and chocolate. This fostered distrust for the adults who once called these men brutal American/British bastards.[439]

While he, of course, felt antipathy towards the Americans now stationed in his homeland, the generosity of the troops drew Tōmatsu towards the occupiers. Given his distrust of the wartime patriotism of Japanese adults and his pronounced resentment towards the 'self-glorifying martinets of the war years,' moreover, it was inevitable that at some level he would remain grateful to the

[439] Tōmatsu, "Toward a Chaotic Sea," 30.

Americans for abolishing the wartime regime.[440] This gratitude is one reason that Tōmatsu would later pronounce that 'love and hate of the liberators were…like the two sides of a single sheet of paper.'[441]

Antipathy that Tōmatsu felt towards the Americans was undoubtedly related to the destruction by Allied forces of his home city of Nagoya during the firebombing campaigns carried out during the final half-year of the war. These campaigns were conducted by the B-29 bombers that were capable of unleashing their destructive power from an altitude beyond the range of Japanese anti-aircraft weapons. Towards the end of the war, however, these aircraft began flying at low altitude in order to maximise 'efficiency.'[442] As a result up to 50 per cent of Nagoya was destroyed, including 89 per cent of residential buildings.[443] These raids gave Tōmatsu an early taste of American power in its most brutal form. Rather than take cover in the shelters, however, he lay in bed with a mirror positioned to watch the spectacle, which he described as a 'pageant of light,' and a 'feast of metallic beauty.'[444] The presence of America in Japan as a central theme of Tōmatsu's photography may well have derived from this early fascination with American military power. Like most Japanese teenagers during the war, Tōmatsu had been trained to hate the enemy. He was required to participate in regular drills in which Japanese children charged a straw effigy representing American and British soldiers. Yet his ambivalent attitude regarding the Americans was clear even at this age – he was often punished by being forced to crawl along freezing ground on his belly for failing to demonstrate sufficient ardour for this task. [445]

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[440] Leo Rubinfien, "Shōmei Tōmatsu: The Skin of the Nation," in *Shōmei Tōmatsu: The Skin of the Nation* (San Francisco: Yale University Press, 2004), 23.
[441] Tōmatsu, cited inJohn W. Dower, "Contested Ground: Shōmei Tōmatsu and the Search for Identity in Postwar Japan," in *Shōmei Tōmatsu: Skin of the Nation* (San Francisco: Yale University Press, 2004), 63.
[442] Robert McNamara, in Errol Morris, "The Fog of War: Eleven Lessons from the Life of Robert S. Mcnamara," (America: Sony Picures Classics, 2004).
[443] Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War 2*, 46.
[444] Shōmei Tōmatsu, "The Original Scene," in *Traces, 50 Years of Tōmatsu's Works*, ed. Sumiyo Mitsuhashi Atsuyuki Nakahara (Tokyo: Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, 1999), 183.
[445] Rubinfien, "Shōmei Tōmatsu: The Skin of the Nation," 12-13.

The influence of Tōmatsu's experience of wartime bombing and the Occupation in his depiction of Japan's US military base towns in *Chewing Gum and Chocolate* is apparent in the balance of objective construction and subjective response present in many scenes featured. This balance is particularly appropriate to the nebulous mix of documentation and authorial input that characterises photographic representation itself. Thus, while the images in *Chewing Gum and Chocolate* contain powerful and persistent allusions to war, defeat, and the spectre of American power in Japan, they stop short at conveying a simplistic and overt message of United States neocolonial domination. Rather, the images reveal the fluid ways in which power relations underpinned Japanese and American interaction at the everyday level. Particularly important here is the issue of race, with Tōmatsu's demonstrating a sophisticated understanding of the inequitable race relations that operated within the US military at the time. In other words, in addition to invoking the hierarchies that governed interactions between Americans and locals, the images reveal the hierarchies that operated within the American military itself.

The Nebulous Nature of Postwar Americanisation

Critiques of Americanisation were not unique to Japan, but were in fact present in many other societies in the postwar period that arguably marked the height of America's global influence. Fresh from victory in war, the United States had a strong determination in the postwar era to shape the world according to its ideals, an intention articulated by Henry Luce (1898-1967) in his influential essay 'The American Century.' Luce was the media magnate who published the *Time, Life,* and *Fortune* magazines. He has been referred to as 'the most influential private citizen of his day' who 'used his vastly successful journalism as a kind of secular pulpit from which he preached the virtues of American engagement in Asia.'[446] Published as an editorial in a February, 1941 edition of *Life* magazine, 'The American Century' argued that America's non-intervention in world affairs in the first part of the twentieth century was a result of being 'unable to accommodate

[446] Robert E. Herzstein, *Henry R. Luce, Time, and the American Crusade in Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 1.

themselves spiritually and practically' to the role of world leadership.[447] The result had been 'disastrous consequences for themselves [Americans] and for all mankind.'[448] The 'cure' Luce prescribed for this malaise was for America to 'to accept wholeheartedly our duty and our opportunity as the most powerful and vital nation in the world and in consequence to exert upon the world the full impact of our influence, for such purposes as we see fit and by such means as we see fit.'[449] Luce wanted America to bring to the world 'the characteristically American promise' of 'the abundant life' made possible by free market capitalism. This was in contrast to the economic models proposed by 'demagogues and proponents of all manner of slick schemes and "planned economies".'[450] Unfettered markets was one 'freedom' in the American worldview according to which the world would be shaped: 'it is for America and for America alone to determine whether a system of free economic enterprise – an economic order compatible with freedom and progress – shall or shall not prevail in this century.'[451]

The new American internationalism would, however, go beyond the imposition of its economic ideology upon the world. Advocating for America to become 'the Good Samaritan of the entire world,' Luce argued that it was 'the manifest duty of this country to undertake to feed all the people of the world who as a result of this worldwide collapse of civilization are hungry and destitute.'[452] As clear from Tōmatsu's reflections cited above, this altruistic side of the occupiers at first confounded many Japanese who had been encouraged by wartime state propaganda to think of the Allies as *kichiku* (demon-beasts).[453] Tōmatsu recalled how as a child he imagined the Americans to have 'noses hooked like beaks, and to wear hats that had sharp points, like rotten teeth.'[454] This image is

[447] Henry R. Luce, "The American Century," *Diplomatic History* 23, no. 2 (1999): 165.
[448] Herzstein, *Henry R. Luce, Time, and the American Crusade in Asia*, 165.
[449] Luce, "The American Century," 166.
[450] Ibid., 168.
[451] Ibid., 170.
[452] Junkerman, *Chewing Gum and Chocolate: Photographs by Shōmei Tōmatsu*, 170.
[453] Rubinfien, "Shōmei Tōmatsu: The Skin of the Nation," 12.
[454] Shōmei Tōmatsu, "Senryo [Occupation]," in *Chewing Gum and Chocolate: Photographs by Shomei Tomatsu*, ed. Leo Rubinfien and John Junkerman (New York: Aperture, 2014), 195.

understandable given that, as John Dower argued, the Pacific War was perhaps the most racialised military conflict in living memory. [455]

The ambiguity evident in response to the American presence on the mainland was also evident in Okinawa where, as Chris Ames notes, the encounter with American generosity was experienced even sooner. While the US forces invaded the islands and engaged in fierce battle with the Japanese army, they also provided food, shelter, and clothing for the Okinawan civilians caught in the crossfire. Ames observes that for many Okinawans this was 'their first taste of American culinary culture,' coming in the form of 'powdered milk and eggs, butter, corn, tinned meat, and ice cream,' food unfamiliar to Okinawan palettes that was nonetheless greatly welcomed in those dire circumstances.[456]

It is likely that the abundance of supplies Tōmatsu observed through the fences of the bases near his native city of Nagoya included materials destined for feeding the devastated Japanese people. Similarly, the altruistic intent behind the GIs' distribution of chewing gum and chocolate, whether personally motivated or part of a systematic plan, provides a sense of the occupiers as Luce's 'Good Samaritans.' Nonetheless, it was impossible to ignore the fact that any economic, political, or social benefit that came with the Americans was the result of defeat. Thus, for many, enjoyment of American culture came alongside a sense of humiliation, an experience articulated by the actor and theatre director Kushida Kazuyoshi (b.1942). Kushida recounts the childhood experience of going to a Christmas event organised by the American military: 'someone dressed like Santa Claus handed out candy and they put on a show. I was really happy and having fun. But deep in my heart, even as a child, I couldn't help feel humiliated at how nice they were. Even as a child, I felt both things.'[457]

The specific kind of ambivalence noted by Kushida is evident in a more

[455] John Dower, *War without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*(New York: Pantheon Books, 1986).
[456] Chris Ames, "*Amerikamun*: Consuming America and Ambivalence Towards the U.S. Presence in Postwar Okinawa," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 75, no. 1 (2016): 41.
[457] Linda Hoaglund, "Anpo: Art X War," (Harriman, New York: New Day Films, 2010).

generalised fashion in this image (figure 1) from *Chewing Gum and Chocolate*.

Figure 1: "Yokosuka, 1959" from *Chewing Gum and Chocolate*, by Tōmatsu Shōmei, 2014.

This photograph is from one of Tōmatsu's earlier photographic expeditions into Japan's base towns. The image is of Yokosuka, a key Japanese military wartime site that was occupied by American forces almost immediately following the surrender which, according to the American Navy's official website, still houses the 'largest overseas U.S. Naval installation' and is internationally 'one of the most strategically important bases' for the US military.[458] Perhaps more than any others in the *Chewing Gum and Chocolate* series, this image critiques the postwar dynamics between America and Japan. Evoking the title of the series, the child at front is consumed by the act of blowing a bubble, recalling the chewing gum handed out to children. This is in spite of the fact that, as Dower points out, the child is actually playing with a 'sticky substance popular with Japanese children

[458] Commander Navy Installations Command, "Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka," http://www.cnic.navy.mil/regions/cnrj/installations/cfa_yokosuka.html.

at the time.'[459] Whether chewing gum or otherwise, the figure of the American sailor behind the child creates the impression of the plaything as a gift from either himself or another serviceman. The coarse texture of film grain and strong contrast adds grittiness to the urban space captured in this scene. The proliferation of English language bar advertisement signs denotes the space as clearly dedicated to drinking and sex for off duty servicemen, and thus hardly a place suitable for a child. The impression of the American base town in this photograph is of a place replete with corrupting pleasures. Taken as a broader critique of postwar society, the initial impression is of a Japanese populace which has become unthinkingly consumed by the immediate pleasures of American culture, controlled by the insidious force of consumerism. The child's absorbed fascination with the momentary amusement offered by the plaything seems to suggest more broadly the extent to which the Japanese population has been seduced. Such an interpretation is given weight by Tōmatsu's larger concerns about the way consumer culture in the postwar had become a trap for urban Japanese.

There are some aspects to the above photograph (figure 1), however, that resist too simplistic an interpretation of a monolithic and 'bad' America corrupting a unitary Japanese culture. In the first instance, as Dower notes, the space photographed is the 'segregated "Harlem" section' of Yokosuka.[460] Such segregation continued unofficially through to the Vietnam War when African American soldiers who transgressed these boundaries often risked being physically assaulted by their white compatriots.[461] This spatial segregation reflected broader racial inequality in the US military, as noted by Yukiko Koshiro:

> The reality for Americans in occupied Japan…was the policy of racial segregation between white and non-white soldiers. The black units serving in the Occupation forces in Japan rose rapidly due to high recruitment and low discharge rates

[459] Dower, "Contested Ground: Shōmei Tōmatsu and the Search for Identity in Postwar Japan," 66.
[460] Ibid.
[461] Michael S. Molasky, *The American Occupation of Japan and Okinawa: Literature and Memory*, ed. Mark Selden, Routledge Studies in Asia's Transformations (London: Routledge, 1999), 55.

> among black soldiers. In these units, inequities in assignments and promotions, frequent discrimination in housing and recreational facilities, and problems of crime and punishment were evident.[462]

With this in mind, the space depicted in the above photograph (figure 1) suggests not only the American subjugation of Japanese society to American interests, but also the subordinated position of the African American sailor who stands within it. This is signified by the pose of the man who seems lost or ill at ease, and whose physical presence is dwarfed not only by the child in the foreground, but also by the shabby and advertisement laden landscape in which he stands. Distracted by something to his left outside the frame, he appears disassociated from the young girl and her activity. Dower speculates that the girl herself appears to be of mixed race[463] – the daughter of a serviceman and local Japanese woman, perhaps, or even the pictured man's daughter. The possibly mixed race parentage undercuts the girl's symbolic value as one side of a simplistic Japan/America dichotomy, as does knowledge of the subordinated position of the African American sailor within the US military. Like many other photographs, figure 1 can be viewed on multiple levels, speaking to the complex entanglement of cultures and power relations explicit in the base towns of Japan.

The Aircraft as Allegory for American Power

Not all of the images in *Chewing Gum and Chocolate* depict America with the kind of equivocality observable above. Present throughout the series also are photographs that confirm the irreducible reality of US military power, frequently represented by bombers similar to those that had wreaked havoc during the incendiary bombing of Japan's cities before unleashing nuclear weapons on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. As noted at the start of this chapter, Tōmatsu had been a fascinated witness to this spectacle, and the image of destructive power seems to

[462] Yukiko Koshiro, *Trans-Pacific Racisms and the U.S. Occupation of Japan*, ed. Michael Hunt Carol Gluck, The United States and Pacific Asia: Studies in Social, Economic, and Political Interaction (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 55.
[463] Dower, "Contested Ground: Shōmei Tōmatsu and the Search for Identity in Postwar Japan," 66.

have left an indelible imprint on him. The following (figure 2) potently evokes Tōmatsu's wartime encounter with these aircraft.

Figure 2: "Kadena, Okinawa, 1969" from *Chewing Gum and Chocolate*, by Tōmatsu Shōmei, 2014.

The immediate impression is of a powerful and masculine America counterposed against a weak and feminine Japan. Here we see the iconic B-52, a successor to the wartime B-29s, deployed to mercilessly bomb the 'enemy' landscape during the Vietnam War, a point that heightens the sense of threat. The surrounding landscape, a waste facility, allegorises the ruins of war, which Tōmatsu referred to as the *genkōkei*, or 'primary landscape' of postwar Japan.[464] Seen from this perspective, the juxtaposition of Okinawan subject and American warplane sets up a re-enactment of the Pacific War and subsequent occupation.

Yet the image is not simply a straightforward depiction of the imbalance of neocolonial power relations. The woman appears of equal size to the plane, and

[464] Junkerman, *Chewing Gum and Chocolate: Photographs by Shōmei Tōmatsu*, 185.

the composition is such that she has an equal presence within the frame. She seems not to regard the plane with fear, but with disinterest almost, as if the airplane is a little more than a nuisance. The manner in which she stands seems to reflect a mixture of defiance in the face of the plane's intrusion as well as the resignation of the oppressed. We are given a nuanced sense of this woman's perspective as an Okinawan woman whose homeland has been occupied for several decades by the Americans.

Tōmatsu's preoccupation with this metaphor of the ruined landscape as the substratum of postwar Japan can be considered common to a generation who were born in wartime and were coming of age during the catastrophic end of the war and subsequent occupation. Roman Rosenbaum has identified this generation as *yakeato sedai*, or 'the generation coming of age amidst the burned-out ruins after the war.'[465] As Rosenbaum writes: 'the single defining feature of this generation is that they experienced firsthand the holocaust of fire-bombings or the atomic bombings of major Japanese metropolitan areas as their psychological make-up was reaching maturity.'[466] Tōmatsu, born in 1930, fits within this definition of the *yakeoto sedai*. Having experienced first-hand the destruction of Japan's cityscapes at a formative age meant that the image of these scenes left an indelible impression upon his psyche and became the cognitive basis for his direct interactions with Americans. It also influenced his perceptions of the particular type of modernity that was constructed in Japan after the war. In the above photograph of an American bomber flying towards an Okinawan woman (figure 2), the indelibility of this image is confirmed by its allegorical recurrence 24 years after the end of the war in the form of the rubbish-strewn landscape that surrounds the woman and above which the B-52 bomber soars.

While in figure 2 the landscape operates as an overt metaphor for the trauma of war and occupation, it is the recurring motif of the airplane in the *Chewing Gum and Chocolate* series of photographs that best signifies the never-to-be-forgotten

[465] Roman Rosenbaum, "The Generation of the Burnt-out Ruins," *Japanese Studies* 27, no. 3 (2007): 281.
[466] Ibid., 283.

experience of bombing and occupation. At times the airplane is the central focus of the image and might be either motion-blurred or sharply defined. On other occasions, the planes are either of equal importance to human figures (as in figure 2) or else small objects in the distance, as in the following photograph (figure 3), which was also taken in Okinawa.

Figure 3: "Okinawa, ca. 1969-78" from *Chewing Gum and Chocolate*, by Tōmatsu Shōmei, 2014.

Instead of a single bomber plane (as in figure 2), three fighter jets – aircraft of equally destructive purpose as the B-52 – are pictured racing towards the blurred and indistinct figure in the foreground. Based upon his countenance and what we can discern of his attire, we might assume that the figure is Japanese or Okinawan and male, although he may even be American. This indistinctiveness creates an ambiguity that suggests the dissolution of the individual, either Japanese or American, in the face of a more sharply defined, superpower 'America.' The juxtaposition of 'America' as a generalised threat against the dissolving subject depicted is enhanced by the lack of context – the background is a lifeless and indistinctive grey sky. The image seems to simultaneously denote both the ever-

present echo of wartime experience and the existential threat posed by Americanisation. Like figure 1, however, this metaphor is not entirely categorical in its message of power relations – the human figure occupies much more of the frame, making the aircraft seem miniature by comparison. Similarly, and unlike figure 1, the back of the figure is turned to the airplanes, a seeming statement of defiance and suggesting the planes to be a peripheral distraction rather than machines that are mounting a full frontal assault. In other words, it is difficult to reduce the power relations suggested to a simple binary of oppressor/oppressed.

In a partial reversal of the visual devices featured above (figure 3), the following (figure 4) transposes the clearly defined figure of an American soldier against a blurred airplane in the background.

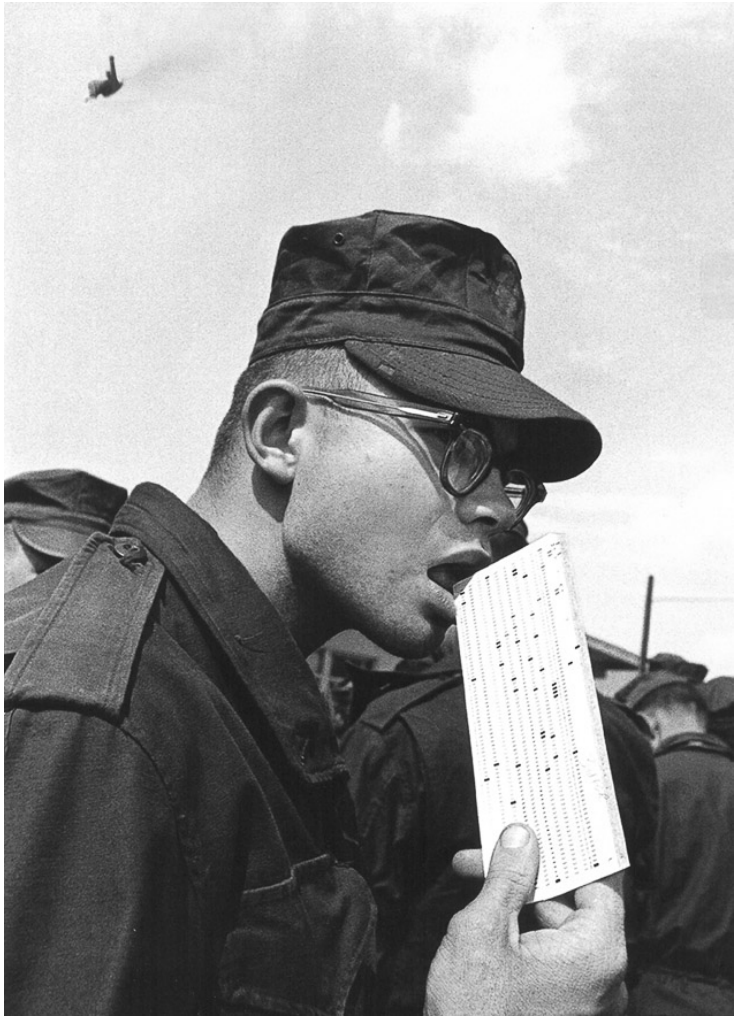

Figure 4: "Kin, Okinawa, 1969" from *Chewing Gum and Chocolate*, by Tōmatsu Shōmei, 2014.

Like many of Tōmatsu's photographs of American servicemen, this has been taken from a low angle. We might speculate as to why this is so. It may be that many of the men Tōmatsu photographed were significantly taller than him. Alternatively, positioning his camera below eye level was perhaps a less confrontational way to approach the subject, avoiding conflict while allowing a more relaxed and candid pose. This strategy is particularly useful when working so close to a subject. Regardless of the reason, the effect is a sense of imposing physical presence. The soldier occupies a significant portion of the frame; the khaki of his uniform rendered a dark shade against the light greys of the sky, setting up a tonal contrast that amplifies his physicality. The camera's close proximity to the subject induces a sense of tight space, of being uncomfortably close. The sense of intimidation symbolised by Tōmatsu's use of low angle and close proximity, however, is softened by other aspects of the image. The most immediate is the man's pensive expression as he rests a punch card upon his open mouth. This gesture suggests he is deep in thought; the punch card itself might signify his deployment to Vietnam given that this photograph was taken in Okinawa in 1969. In contrast to the threatening figure of the B-52 bomber in the earlier photograph (figure 2), the tiny, indistinct shape of the airplane in the upper left corner seems inconsequential. It is symbolic that it flies not towards the viewer (or the main subject) but away, suggesting either the young soldier's imminent deployment to Vietnam or recent arrival from the combat theatre. These last aspects of the image provide a sense of the man's subjectivity, working against a simplistic characterisation, and bringing our attention to the potential difference between powerful 'America' as an institutional entity and the less powerful circumstances of the individual American.

Tōmatsu's 'Realist' Approach to Photographic Representation

The coalescence of America as generalised threat with a sense of the subject's individuality is a recurring theme in *Chewing Gum and Chocolate.* Like the above photograph, Tōmatsu's use of composition repeatedly tells a story of America as an oversized presence in Japan, while other aspects such as gestures and facial expressions work against a simplistic demonisation of his subjects. This perhaps confirms the extent to which Tōmatsu differentiates his dislike of American

government policy and consumer culture from the individuals he encounters in the base towns. There appears to be an underlying methodology in his work whereby he tries – to some extent – to limit the impact his personal reactions to the subject matter have upon the final image. Tōmatsu acknowledges that 'photographers are not free from the tendency to fetishize their subjects,' whether in a positive or negative sense, and that 'sometimes when I face a subject I feel antipathy…when that happens, I usually don't release the shutter.' This demonstrates a sincere appreciation of the power of photography to affect opinion and the ethical responsibilities placed upon the photographer. Tōmatsu goes onto state that 'regardless of one's public stance, the act of taking a photograph means affirming the subject, whether consciously or unconsciously.'[467] The use of the word 'affirming' here is not intended to confirm a reality, but to bring our attention to the way photographs are so often seen not as representation but as truth itself. Tōmatsu was aware that one fraction of a second does not necessarily sum up the subject, and that photographs have the potential to elide a sense of complexity if the photographer too readily allows his or her self to be given over to polemics.

Remaining neutral is, of course, a difficult undertaking in any representational discipline, and this is not necessarily what Tōmatsu tries to do. Rather, one can observe within much of his work an attempt to balance objectivity with subjectivity. This is particularly true in his encounters with human subjects where, as evidenced by the comments cited above, he is keenly aware of the camera's potential for misrepresentation. In this way we see his liminal position on the cusp between two predominant themes in the postwar history of Japanese photography. Tōmatsu emerged as a photographer during the height of postwar realism, a prevailing movement internationally as well as in Japan. The international significance of this approach was most clearly represented by the kind of modernism that shaped *The Family of Man* exhibition organised by Edward Steichen at the New York Museum of Modern Art. As discussed in

[467] Tōmatsu, cited in Junkerman, *Chewing Gum and Chocolate: Photographs by Shōmei Tōmatsu*, 65.

chapter four, while highly subjective, the central aim of this project was to depict a particular kind of social reality.

Given the influx of American culture into Japan after the war, it is reasonable to assume that Steichen's form of American modernist realism had some influence in Japan. Yet realism had already held an important place in Japanese photographic discourses well before the occupation. In the two decades prior to defeat, an idea of the 'Real Photo' had existed which, according to Joe Takeba, incorporated 'three elements: expression of beauty of the object, documentation of the era and reports on people's lives, and photographs produced through the sculptural properties of light.'[468] Initially, this kind of work was characterised by surrealist and abstract work done in a sharply focused 'photographic' style. However, as Japan's military actions ramped up in the late 1930s, a different preoccupation with 'documentation of the era' came to the fore. Inspired in particular by war photography from China, photographers, both amateur and professional, became interested in photojournalism.[469] The work of some of Japan's most successful realist photographers featured in *Nippon* magazine, a government publication aimed at characterising 'actual life and events in modern Japan,' in a way that both tended to reinforce many Western stereotypes about Japan but also advertise its modern status to an overseas market. *Nippon* sought 'cultural legitimacy in the eyes of the West' in a format familiar to western eyes – that of the museum exhibit.[470] Central to this was the use of montage, a modern aesthetic of German influence that graphic designers in Japan had already employed in commercial work for a decade or so.[471] Heavy manipulation of their images by *Nippon's* editors, and a growing dissatisfaction with their association to Japan's increasingly belligerent militarism, led many photographers, including Hamaya, Domon Ken, and Kimura Ihei, to quit the magazine and instead turn their lens as an antithesis upon Japanese traditional life. Interestingly, the

[468] Takeba Joe, "The Age of Modernism: From Visualisation to Socialisation," in *The History of Japanese Photography*, ed. John Junkerman (London: Yale University Press, 2003), 147.
[469] Ibid., 153-6
[470] Weisenfeld, "Touring Japan-as-Museum: Nippon and Other Japanese Imperialist Travelogues," 748-50.
[471] "Publicity and Propaganda in 1930s Japan: Modernism as Method," *Design Issues* 25, no. 4 (2009): 28.

Japanese state's emphasis on representing social reality indirectly fostered an ongoing interest after the war in documenting Japanese social life for photographers like Domon, Hamaya (see chapter four), and Kimura.[472]

Realism then emerged in the postwar era as a key factor in cultural production.[473] Thomas contends that 1953 represented the height of realism in Japanese photography. Because the country had become newly independent, the issue of reality was foremost. That is, the absence of a central authority with the power of either the wartime government or the occupying forces to represent Japanese society to itself led to a preoccupation with how power functioned in the everyday, and how this should be represented in photographs:

> ...the goal of photographic *rearizimu* [realism] was the substratum structures of human interaction, the play of power that determined the shape of civic space, the distribution of pain and wealth, the relative weight of the past, present, and future. *Rearitii* consisted of the invisible sinews orchestrating social interactions; photographic *rearizimu* framed these forces on paper. Like power, *rearizimu*...[is] a subject worked through in action, not a thing or a word. If properly and fearlessly pursued, the activity of *rearizimu* culminates in a black-and-white rectangle in which 'the real' is made manifest.[474]

Thomas argues that this take on photojournalism was unique to Japan. It was a break from a classical idea that prized the objective description of 'reality,' a view espoused at that time by Natori Yōnosuke, the esteemed photo critic mentioned also in the previous chapter (and who, it should be noted, played a central role in the production of wartime photographic propaganda, including *Nippon* magazine).[475] In a 1960 essay entitled 'New Tendencies in Photographic

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[472] Kaneko Ryūichi, "Realism and Propaganda: The Photographer's Eye Trained on Society," in *The History of Japanese Photography*, ed. John Junkerman (London: Yale University Press, 2003), 192-3.
[473] Julia Adeney Thomas, "Power Made Visible: Photography and Postwar Japan's Elusive Reality," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 67, no. 2 (2008): 369.
[474] Ibid., 390-1.
[475] For instance, see Andrea Germer, "Visual Propaganda in Wartime East Asia-the Cas of Natori Yōnosuke," *The Asia Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 9, no. 20 (2011).

Expression' Natori criticised Tōmatsu's base town work in particular for too overtly expressing 'the will of the cameraman' and not letting the subject speak for itself. As a result, argued Natori, Tōmatsu had 'discarded photojournalism's respect for the specific reality' and had begun 'moving in a direction that is not restricted by time or place.'[476] In reply, Tōmatsu wrote that 'If Mr Natori's way of thinking is the basis for the doctrine of photojournalism, then my photographs are absolutely not photojournalism.' [477] Instead, as Iizawa Kōtarō writes, Tōmatsu, like many of his contemporaries:

> …emphasized the autonomous will of the photographer and sought to organise the 'image' freely. They began with the same reality, but they were not confined within the existing framework of the story; instead, they gave the image its independence and pursued the developing possibilities in a variety of forms.[478]

We can see Tōmatsu's respect for the 'specific reality' in his stated effort to mediate his own visceral response to the subjects he photographed. In this sense, he did not anchor himself to a linear narrative that told a story in the literal sense when arranging his images after development, but instead exercised his own 'autonomous will' upon the final product. In this way he worked against what might be considered the internationally predominant mode of photojournalistic representation, most strongly embodied by the photographic essays published in Henry Luce's *Life* magazine (in which Luce published 'The American Century'). *Life* prized narrative and detailed context in order to communicate its liberal humanist message.

We can see, then, how Tōmatsu's respect for the 'specific reality' in front of his camera shapes his representation of the Americans whom he encounters. For Tōmatsu, the dedication to 'reality' is to some extent an attempt to supress his most visceral reactions to a scene in the moment that he takes a photograph, and instead to reserve emotional input for the processing and editing phase of the

[476] Natori, cited in Iizawa, "The Evolution of Postwar Photography," 215.
[477] Tōmatsu, cited in ibid., 216.
[478] Ibid.

project. Even in the technical processing of his images there is a dedication to a kind of objectivity. In *Chewing Gum and Chocolate* he rarely employs the strong contrast or exaggerated granularity that would become the hallmark of 1960s and 70s avant garde photography in Japan (an example is the work of Naitō, discussed in chapter three).

This is not to say that Tōmatsu employs an entirely neutral approach to image making given his at times expressive use of camera angle, blur and tilted horizons. An example is the image below (figure 5).

Figure 5: "Okinawa, 1969" from *Chewing Gum and Chocolate*, by Tōmatsu Shōmei, 2014.

This seems a rushed attempt at capturing the airplane in motion, which, judging by its silhouette is, as in figure 2 above, a B-52. In addition to the movement of the camera by Tōmatsu to follow the aircraft's trajectory, the blurred outlines in this image are the result of a slightly longer exposure time (a 'faster' exposure of approximately 1/250 of a second would have been needed to 'freeze' the plane in motion). The low angle of the camera suggests that there is some posing of this photograph, and we might firstly assume that the man farming in the foreground

was the initial intended subject. When the airplane roared into view, however, Tōmatsu may have hurried the shot. It is also possible, on the other hand, that the entire image is intentional, with Tōmatsu selecting and accordingly setting up the photograph at a site where he knew that these planes regularly flew overhead. Either way, the hurried nature of the image suggests the kind of panic that an encounter with these bombers can provoke. As in figure 2, the human subject is, metaphorically at least, threatened by the bomber, itself a generalised emblem of American power and its encroachment into the everyday lives of Japanese and Okinawan people, particularly those who live near the military bases. The eliding of detail in the image produces a rather straightforward response – we are given rough silhouettes that only provide enough information to make broad assumptions about both the content and significance of the image. In this way the image differs from the majority that appear in *Chewing Gum and Chocolate.*

An element that ties the above (figure 5) to the rest of the images in the series, however, is the tangible sense of the viewer's encounter with the subject, of being a part of the scene. The perspective is such that the viewer herself experiences it as Tōmatsu did; this is a hallmark of Tōmatsu's technique that is in fact observable throughout his *oeuvre*. At times this method produces a sense of claustrophobia, of being uncomfortably close to the subject. This effect is particularly pronounced in the image below (figure 6).

Figure 6: "Sasebo, 1966" from *Chewing Gum and Chocolate*, by Tōmatsu Shōmei, 2014.

The ability of this photograph to draw in the viewer, to make her or him feel a part of the setting, is accentuated by the fact that the image is presented across almost two pages in the *Chewing Gum and Chocolate* book. This layout is discernable in figure 6 by the vertical page fold line that appears to divide the image just to the right of centre. The book itself is a relatively large format, so that the printed image measures approximately 41 by 29 centimetres. The close perspective seems a result of the photographer's close proximity to the scene as opposed to having been taken from a distance with a telephoto lens. The spatial depth of the image seems a product of a 'normal' perspective lens (generally a 50 millimetre focal length, said to mimic the human eye's frame of view). A telephoto lens that might have allowed Tōmatsu to work from further away, on the other hand, would have compressed the sense of spatial depth.[479] As in the previous image, the frame is mostly dominated by the large physical presence of the American servicemen, sailors this time. The crossed arms of the man at right

[479] An exaggerated example of this effect is noticeable when, for example, one watches televised sport in which the crowd seems to be positioned directly behind the players in frame when in fact they may 20 or 30 meters back from the field of play.

and his stern facial expression makes him, and by association the sailor next to him, seem confrontational, an intimidating and authoritative presence. Perhaps they are standing guard over or at least disapprovingly observing some political protest. In either case, they appear to constitute a physical barrier that governs the surrounding space and those within it, whether by restraining those behind them, or pushing the woman and child into the foreground.

Closer inspection, however, reveals several aspects that suggest otherwise: the amused expression on the face of the woman directly behind the sailor's shoulder and the toddler's head, and the quizzical expression with which the man in the top right of frame views the photographer suggest a more festive event such as a parade, or at least a relatively peaceful public demonstration. Even the closed eyed expression of the woman seemingly squeezed against the brick wall seems merely to be a momentary blink as she manoeuvres past the two men rather than a reaction to physical coercion. And while they may try to assert authority in their immediate surrounding space, the seemingly stern expressions on the sailor's faces may be read as more discomfort than any desire to confront. The photograph (figure 6) is thus another example of the manner in which Tōmatsu's representation of American power in postwar Japan pays attention to the individual experience of the subjects who are in fact small cogs in the machine of that power. While to some extent required to embody the policies of her or his government, the individual is nonetheless ultimately differentiated from that government's acts.

The Ambiguous Nature of American Power

Despite the often benign nature of the individual Americans present in the base towns, it is nonetheless impossible to forget the weight of the institutional, cultural, and military power that supports their presence. For Tōmatsu, no matter the personal qualities of these individuals, the reality of the unequal power relationship operating is inescapable. It is this knowledge that provides an unexpected charge to the quotidian scene depicted in the image below (figure 7).

Figure 7: "Naha, Okinawa, 1969" from *Chewing Gum and Chocolate*, by Tōmatsu Shōmei, 2014.

There is little in the body language of the teenage schoolboys to suggest they are discomfited by the Americans whom they pass on their way to or from school. The three trailing boys glance towards the men seated on the bridge, presumably in greeting. An innocuous exchange, perhaps, but the construction of the image is nonetheless significant. The men on the bridge railing sit along a central line that divides the image, both literally and metaphorically, into light and dark. The evenness of the light grey tones of the sidewalk and road at left suggest an uncomplicated space of everyday encounter, while the inky tones of the water behind the men on the railing seem symbolic of the darkness underpinning the everyday; this water becomes Tōmatsu's *genkōkei*, primary landscape, of violence, war and defeat. The darkness of the water also signifies the shadowy workings of American power in Okinawa – which was still occupied at the time – that framed even the most benign encounter between Americans and Okinawans. The three men are balanced between these aspects of light and dark, not clearly friend nor foe, thus allegorising the liminal position in which Americans, as

individuals, are placed in the spaces of the base town. They are simultaneously encountered as subjective individuals and signifiers of the America that occupies Okinawa. This America, as Tōmatsu argues, is a culture that has 'plumbed our daily lives.'[480] To add a further layer of complexity, the scene is disrupted by the young man who looks back at the camera. We are shaken by this visible reminder of the photographer's involvement in the scene, and the realisation that what we view is a mediated reality. More broadly, the boy's look, albeit friendly, reminds us of the symbolic value of Tōmatsu's presence as representative of mainland Japan, and thus in turn the role played by the Japanese government in the ongoing presence of American military.

Cocktail Party, a novella by Okinawan writer Ōshiro Tatsuhiro (b.1925), provides a keen sense of the precarious nature of relations between Americans and the local population in Okinawa that are depicted in the above image (figure 7). Set in the 1960s, the narrator is a middle aged Okinawan man (he is not given a name) who is friendly with Mr Ogawa, a Japanese mainlander, Mr Sun, a Chinese man, and Mr Miller, who works for the American military. Their group is united by a collective interest in learning the Chinese language. The story relates the main protagonist's quest for justice regarding the rape of his daughter by an American serviceman. While the outcome is not ultimately revealed, throughout the narrative it becomes clear that systemic legal issues and a desire to prioritise harmonious relations in Okinawa make justice unlikely. Aware of the problems that will result, the young woman involved, moreover, is reluctant herself to openly accuse her attacker.

Although the protagonist's relations with each of his friends are emblematic of the politically complex relations between their respective nations and cultures, the portrayal of Mr Miller resonates most with the current discussion of Tōmatsu's work. At the outset the American appears benevolent. Yet the protagonist feels a sense of anxiety as he ventures through the residential area of the base town en route to the eponymous cocktail party being held at Mr Miller's

[480] Tōmatsu, cited in Junkerman, *Chewing Gum and Chocolate: Photographs by Shōmei Tōmatsu*, 35.

residence. Despite having official permission to enter the base precinct, he fears being mistaken for an interloper and arrested, as others have been, by the Military Police. This anxiety is fed by a 'frightening experience' that had occurred ten years earlier when he became lost while attempting an illicit shortcut.[481] The uniformity of the streets and buildings in the residential area were disorienting: 'all the houses looked exactly alike…only the shapes of the shrubbery varied occasionally.' [482] He felt acutely alienated in the space: 'when I realised I was lost, panic seized me. In my mind I tried desperately to cling to the notion that the housing area was, after all, inside the very same township where I lived, but it was no use.' [483] This alienation was exacerbated by his encounters with Okinawan support staff: 'I stopped one of the maids and asked her how to get to the east end. She showed me the way impassively. Her placid, self-possessed air gave me the impression she was someone who belonged here and made me feel a vast distance between us.'[484] His current experience, however, is more positive because he has permission to enter the zone: 'today I felt good. After all I'd been invited to Mr Miller's party.'[485]

As the story develops, Mr Miller's benevolent image collapses in the face of the Okinawan protagonist's attempts to ensure justice for his daughter. When asked to advocate on behalf of the young woman, Mr Miller suddenly becomes officious and vaguely hostile: 'Mr Miller eyed you sharply. You tensed' (the author employs second person narrative in the second part of the novella).[486] Mr Miller evades the request on the grounds that: 'we've worked hard to build friendships that transcend race and nationality. And I believe that together we've established equality in our relationships. I wouldn't want something like this to destroy the balance we've worked so hard to achieve.'[487] It transpires that Mr Miller, who has always evaded questions regarding his employment, is a member of the

[481] Ōshiro Tatsuhiro, "The Cocktail Party," in *Okinawa: Two Postwar Novellas*, *Japan Research Monograph* (Berkely: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Center for Japanese Studies, 1989), 33.
[482] Ibid., 33-4.
[483] Ibid., 34.
[484] Ibid.
[485] Ibid.
[486] Ibid., 56.
[487] Ibid.

Army Counter Intelligence Corps, which causes the Chinese study group to doubt the sincerity of his relationship with them. With this new knowledge, speculation arises that Mr Miller formed the group for intelligence-gathering purposes. Mr Ogawa then speculates out loud: 'I wonder what other secrets they know about me!'[488]

The ambiguity of both the American officer and the spaces of the American base in *The Cocktail Party* resonates with Tōmatsu's own experience of those sites. The Janus-faced character of Mr Miller reflects the inescapable fact of American institutional power that overshadows even the most amicable of individual relations and which taints all base town interaction, particularly in Okinawa. The protagonist's angst-filled experience of walking through the military base suggests the extent to which parts of his own country have become a foreign land. The ambiguity of the base town space, not quite America but also not Okinawa, makes it geographically and cognitively disorienting. The space is a site of conquest that is the physical manifestation of America's colonisation of Okinawa, a landscape resonant with repressed memories of war and defeat. An overlay of a disembodied American culture upon a pre-existent Japanese or Okinawan substrate is accompanied by the resonance of military violence emanating both from history and from America's physical presence. It is this nebulous constellation that is captured in Tōmatsu's images of the base towns, producing images that defy simple binaries of categorisation.

Tōmatsu himself had his own everyday encounter with the American military that was similar to that of the protagonist of *The Cocktail Party*. In a short essay entitled 'The Sea of Conspiracy' (*'Boryaku no umi'*), originally published in 1972 after he visited Okinawa in order to witness reversion to Japanese rule, he recounts the discomfort he felt passing two American servicemen. As related in the essay, this encounter occurred while Tōmatsu stood on a cliff face overlooking an idyllic ocean vista where a friend, an Okinawan man and fellow photographer who worked for the US Army newspaper *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, had died under possibly suspicious circumstances while conducting an

[488] Ibid., 58.

underwater photo shoot. In the following passage, Tōmatsu relates the anxieties this caused when he encountered some American servicemen when out for a walk:

> I felt the presence of someone behind me, and turned to look. Two American soldiers were walking directly toward me. I instantly braced myself. They were both around twenty, with muscles bulging from their well-built shoulders. I thought, 'I don't stand a chance,' but I was standing at the edge of the cliff and I couldn't step back. The distance between us grew smaller, all my nerves converged in my eyes. When they were about two metres away, one of the soldiers greeted me. They passed by me and went down the concrete steps toward the sea.[489]

Many, including Tōmatsu, doubted the official explanation given for the death of the man referred to above, who was said to have drowned in relatively shallow water as a result of becoming entangled in his diving equipment. Tōmatsu found this hard to credit, knowing that his friend was in very good physical shape and an expert diver who was fastidious with his equipment. This, and other discrepancies led to the speculation that the death was the result of a US military Criminal Investigative Division (CID) conspiracy.[490] Despite his own reservations, however, Tōmatsu found the idea of conspiracy equally hard to believe: 'if there was a CID conspiracy, there had to have been a compelling reason. Why would he have to be eliminated? I haven't the slightest idea.'[491] He also wondered why the CID would risk such an incident, and whether it was even possible to commit murder in the circumstances in which his friend had died. The ambiguous circumstances of his friend's death meant that it was impossible to know the truth of the situation, a truth that was 'hidden behind an opaque film.'[492]

It is this shadowy notion of American power, often manifested in systemic and structural imbalances, but also laden with memories of war and defeat, that ties

[489] Tōmatsu, "The Sea of Conspiracy (*Boryaku no umi*)" in Junkerman, *Chewing Gum and Chocolate: Photographs by Shōmei Tōmatsu*, 208.
[490] Ibid., 202-3.
[491] Ibid., 208.
[492] Ibid.

Tōmatsu's sense of disquiet when passing the two soldiers near the top of the cliff face with that of the Okinawan protagonist of *Cocktail Party* walking through the residential area of the base. The physical proximity to 'America' as manifested in daily experience of the base towns results in the presence of threat. Regardless of the benign nature of individuals or spaces encountered, the spectre of war, defeat, occupation, and the ongoing nature of American power are ever present around the base towns.

As noted in chapter two, the effect of the relocation of American military resources from the mainland to Okinawa was the spatial separation of two 'Americas' in Japan. On the mainland, a seemingly benign America existed – one of desire and aspiration centred around consumer culture (Americanisation). In the base towns, on the other hand, America continued to be associated with violence.[493] Sarah Kovner contends that through a series of measures she allegorises as 'soundproofing,' efforts have been made by both Japanese and American authorities to limit the presence of a violent America in the daily experience of the local communities around the bases.[494] These measures have included legislating against prostitution (which was enacted in 1956 but took effect in 1958), a move which merely drove the sex industry into 'bars and cabarets' and away from the public spaces of the streets.[495] This shielded mainstream Japanese society from the 'undesirable' aspects of the American presence, making it 'less noticeable and more tolerable.'[496] Other strategies included reducing 'the territorial footprint' by concentrating military facilities in a few key locations (most notably in Okinawa), reducing overall numbers of military personnel, and limiting the outside base time of off duty servicemen.[497] This latter measure was instituted when it became clear that the majority of injury to person and property committed by servicemen occurred when they

[493] Yoshimi, "'America' as Desire and Violence: Americanization in Postwar Japan and Asia During the Cold War," 40-4.
[494] Sarah Kovner, "The Soundproofed Superpower: American Bases and Japanese Communities 1945-72," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 75, no. 1 (2016).
[495] Ibid., 8.
[496] Ibid.
[497] Ibid., 10.

were off duty.[498] The apprehension with which Tōmatsu and others in the base town communities regarded American servicemen was linked to the history of at times deplorable behaviour exhibited by some servicemen during these off duty hours.

The Nexus of Race and Power at an Individual Level

Race was clearly an issue in the United States military at the time that Tōmatsu was taking photographs in the base towns, a fact that becomes particularly apparent when comparing his portrayals of Caucasian servicemen with those of African American personnel. Without making too simplistic a division, a trend is nonetheless noticeable in *Chewing Gum and Chocolate* whereby white servicemen are represented in ways that subtly remind the viewer of their privileged status, while their African American counterparts are more often depicted sympathetically. The following image (figure 8), which resonates with intimidation and mild hostility, depicts an encounter with a group of white servicemen at a party.

Figure 8: "Okinawa, 1972" from *Chewing Gum and Chocolate*, by Tōmatsu Shōmei, 2014.

[498] Ibid., 11.

The foreboding atmosphere of the space, as well as Tōmatsu's seeming position at the opposite end of this room, suggests the distance he felt from many of the white servicemen he photographed. The reminders of military force are unmistakeable in the reappropriation of military surplus as furniture – sections of missiles seem to be serving as ashtrays and graffiti adorned parachutes line the walls. Additionally, the haphazard way in which the parachutes have been suspended, in combination with the graffiti, produce disconcerting echoes of war destruction, as does the waft of smoke from the cigarette of the man at right. The atmosphere is one of mild aggression, enhanced by the look of vague hostility with which the man at right directly regards the camera. The power of this gaze is somehow magnified by the jagged gap in the fabric directly behind his head. The man at left appears even more sinister, his shaded features and dark glasses signifying some sort of anonymous threat. The viewer – who is made a part of the scene by Tōmatsu's photographic method – feels unwelcome, much as the protagonist in *The Cocktail Party* felt as he made his way through the military base.

The following (figure 9) is similarly charged with hostility, emanating in this instance principally from the man's gaze and provides a sense that Tōmatsu is similarly unwelcome in the space in which this encounter has taken place.

Figure 9: "Kin, Okinawa, ca. 1969-78" from *Chewing Gum and Chocolate*, by Tōmatsu Shōmei, 2014.

The proximity to the subject is much closer here than in the previous image (figure 8), creating a more direct sense of an encounter between photographer and subject. Despite this difference, the images are comparable in the way that the male subject regards the photographer with a steady but unfriendly look. Similarly, there is the hint of festivity that is here signified by the party hat that the woman wears (although any party seems unlikely to be much fun for the woman involved). As one more point of comparison, the allusion to military destruction that was overtly signified in figure 8 by the truncated missiles and the draped parachutes is more obliquely suggested here in the shabbiness of the door the man appears to open, an aspect which also suggests the destitute circumstances of many Okinawans. The obtuse angle of the door and its peeling surface adds discordance to the scene, an impression enhanced by the way that the two figures, particularly the man, stand out strongly against the pale background. We are reminded also of the power relations between white servicemen and local women in the base towns (this will be discussed in more detail in chapter 8), with the proprietary manner in which the man holds the

door for this woman, in combination with his mildly aggressive gaze, connoting a sense of ownership. This connotation of ownership is exacerbated by the fact that the woman is only partially within the frame, facing away from the camera with her face completely invisible, and depicted as little more than an object of possession.

In the following (figure 10) there is a seeming role reversal, in that a woman's disembodied hand leads the diminutive and seemingly bemused and apprehensive man into a strip bar.

Figure 10: "Henoko, Okinawa, 1976" from *Chewing Gum and Chocolate*, by Tōmatsu Shōmei, 2014.

As opposed to the previous two images, the man's gaze seems largely friendly (although a little wary) yet there is nonetheless something discomforting about this scene. This is due to the clearly tawdry context of the strip bar – judging by the entertainments listed on the board behind him – and also to the slightly off-kilter camera angle. Foremost, however, is the man himself, whose garish attire (to contemporary eyes at least) makes him appear small and boyish. This boyishness evokes a naivety at odds with the context, and which complicates the power relations between him and the woman. The woman seems in charge, yet we cannot forget his status as a white American male. This is especially so given that, even more than the previous image (figure 9), we can discern nothing at all about the woman's subjectivity given that only her hand is in the frame. The man's diminutive size and odd appearance reflect here the realities of the base town hierarchies in which even a seemingly feckless individual nonetheless signifies the institutional power of the United States that supports his presence in Okinawa.

If the contradictions within the above image give it a disconcerting edge, this edge is even more observable in the photograph below (figure 11).

Figure 11: "Kin, Okinawa, 1969" from *Chewing Gum and Chocolate*, by Tōmatsu Shōmei, 2014.

The image makes use of the same low angle and close framing as the earlier photograph of the male soldier holding the punch card (figure 4). The figure of the man dominates the frame, and, despite the incongruity of his attire, the low angle from which he has been captured gives him an authoritative presence. His elevated position and dress suggests he is involved in festive activity, perhaps standing on a stage or a passing float. Behind him is a sign for a cheap food outlet, similar to a contemporary convenience store. Tōmatsu's decision to capture this image was undoubtedly related to the contradiction inherent in a hypermasculine American soldier dressed as a woman. The man looks to an undetermined place outside the frame, seemingly lost in thought, a different pose to the previous images, but similarly imperious. Despite the unusual nature of his attire he seems dignified and assured. As a white American male he is able to confidently appropriate female dress without diminishing either his masculinity or authority within the milieu of base town gender and race relations.

Each of the last four images (figures 8 to 11) has an aspect to it that is more broadly reflective of the reservation with which Tōmatsu seems to have approached white servicemen. It is important to note, however, that he does not always depict them this way. There are occasional images providing a more humanising perspective, such as in figure 4 where the viewer wonders at the man's predicament regarding the Vietnam War. On balance, however, those that unsettle outnumber the more sympathetic portrayals.

Tōmatsu's portrayals of African Americans, however, differ quite markedly from his portrayals of white servicemen and are often characterised by a sense of connection between photographer and subject. An example is the following (figure 12) which, while using a more exaggerated framing and perspective to the previous image (figure 11), conveys a sense of affable relations between Tōmatsu and the man on the right.

Figure 12: “Okinawa, 1969” from *Chewing Gum and Chocolate*, by Tōmatsu Shōmei, 2014.

While at a semiotic level the emphasis is on physical size and intimidation, an effect largely attributable to the positioning of the camera, this is undone by the main subject’s amused expression as he looks directly at Tōmatsu. The raised fists indicate the Black Power salute, suggesting the support for the Black Power movement that many African American US servicemen in Okinawa expressed at the time (discussed in more detail in chapter 8). The man’s friendly expression includes the photographer in the gesture, making him a partner in solidarity.

Tōmatsu was on record as having strong sympathy for African Americans in the United States military and was clearly aware of the inequalities faced by these men in the armed services. In a 1969 photography magazine Tōmatsu wrote the following:

> I know a group of black soldiers who raise their fists in resistance when I turn my camera towards them. What is the meaning of this action? As I took the photograph, I remembered a black soldier who committed suicide with a grenade in Yomitan two weeks before that….War weariness is spreading throughout the country according to the *Asahi Shimbun*. The fists the black soldiers raised to the Okinawan sky might have been an expression of antiwar sentiment by people who are extremely unfree and know the stupidity of fighting a war 'for the sake of freedom.'[499]

This passage indicates that, while he may not have been formally aware of the details of the Black Power, he had knowledge of the African American struggle. Horrific incidents such as the suicide to which he alludes clearly impressed upon him the desperation that many of these men felt.

We might speculate that the men to whom Tōmatsu refers above have been captured in the image below (figure 13). Some subjects here, however, are likely to be activists rather than soldiers.

[499] Tōmatsu, cited in Junkerman, *Chewing Gum and Chocolate: Photographs by Shōmei Tōmatsu*, 109.

Figure 13: "Okinawa, ca. 1970" from *Chewing Gum and Chocolate*, by Tōmatsu Shōmei, 2014.

The relatively long hairstyles worn by some of the men, for example, would not be permissible in terms of the regulation short-back-and-sides of the US serviceman. This is particularly true of the man at centre whose 'Afro' was seen as an expression of black empowerment during that era. Adding to the impression of the men as activists is their unmistakably defiant Black Power salute. The gesture is clearly directed towards someone outside the right hand side of frame – perhaps towards fellow African Americans or even in defiance of white servicemen.

Racial politics are not the only context in which black servicemen are depicted. In the following (figure 14), for example, there seems to be personal interaction occurring between photographer and subject.

Figure 14: "Yokosuka, 1959" from *Chewing Gum and Chocolate*, by Tōmatsu Shōmei, 2014.

We can deduce from the signs in the background and the caption that this was taken in the same segregated recreation area of Yokosuka, and during the same period, as the image depicting the girl blowing the bubble discussed at the outset of the chapter (figure 1). As opposed to the symbolism of figure 1, the emphasis here is on the interaction between subject and photographer, the nature of which is unclear but not marked by hostility. Rather, the man gazes vacantly at the camera, a vacantness perhaps attributable to what might be the cannabis pipe that he smokes. Rather than the unwelcoming atmosphere generated by the images depicting white servicemen, here the man's eyes tend to draw the viewer in and create a rather ambiguous sense of connection.

Based on the above images that depict both white and black servicemen, it is possible to conclude that the differing representations in *Chewing Gum and Chocolate* reflect Tōmatsu's criticism of racial inequality within the US military. He unconsciously associated, and perhaps with good cause, the white servicemen he encountered with a privileged establishment that spoke of

universal liberty while at the same time curtailing the freedom of its own citizens on the basest of grounds. He therefore perhaps approached the African American subjects of his photographs with a more open comportment and was less intimidated by these men than by the white servicemen, whom he associated more directly with the institutional power of the US military and the unwelcome Americanisation of Japan more generally.

Conclusion

It is clear that the principal interest of the base towns for Tōmatsu was in the potential that these sites held for probing the ongoing legacies of war and occupation in Japan. His inability to completely erase his formative experiences of the American bombing and occupation of his home city, as well as his ongoing concerns about cultural Americanisation, drew him to these spaces in order to observe directly how these institutions that had so thoroughly permeated postwar Japanese society exerted control. Tōmatsu's approach to photographing these areas might be understood as midway between objectivity and subjectivity. In the main he utilised a relatively straightforward aesthetic, eschewing obvious manipulation of the images. This aesthetic is complemented by a composition style that places the viewer within the scene. Such an approach is in line with postwar trends in Japanese photography that sought not simply to document but to expose the manifestations of social power. In the base town context, this produced images that were not simply univocal representations of a monolithic American oppressor. Rather, Tōmatsu's depiction of the Americans reveals his subjects' humanity in a variety of ways. This is particularly apparent in those images portraying African Americans, but sometimes also apparent in his images of white servicemen. More broadly, while allowing us at times to glimpse the humanity of the individual, the portrayal of servicemen in *Chewing Gum and Chocolate*, especially white servicemen, nonetheless reminds us of America's postwar power over Japan.

CHAPTER EIGHT:

Transgressive Domesticities: Intimate Encounters in Ishikawa Mao's *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa*

Introduction

While Tōmatsu's images of the base towns discussed in the previous chapter depict his public encounters with the Americans largely from a viewpoint of an outsider, Ishikawa Mao's (b.1953) representation of the complex interrelations between gender, culture, and race in these towns is produced more from the insider point of view. In order to produce the 2013 monograph *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa (Hot Days in Okinawa)* that is the subject of this chapter, Ishikawa worked as a bar girl in the African American entertainment area of Teruya, Okinawa City (then called Koza City). She had little difficulty finding this position despite her lack of qualifications: 'I just walked [in] and asked for a job. I couldn't speak any English but I was young and cute so the owner put me to work straight away.'[500] She soon became embedded in the milieu of the base town: 'before I knew it I had become one of them. For about two years, until 1977, I was totally absorbed in that scene.'[501]

It should be noted, however, that Ishikawa's perspective as an insider is not entirely unproblematic. Following the 1982 publication of a monograph entitled *Atsuki hibi in Camp Hansen* (*Hot Days in Camp Hansen*), several of the Japanese women depicted sued the photographer for violation of privacy. The dispute, which might be kept in mind when viewing the later work, was eventually resolved by Ishikawa ceding ownership of the negatives and withdrawing the

[500] Jon Mitchell, "Okinawa Shutterbug Captures Varied Reactions to Hinomaru," *Japan Times* 2011.
[501] Mao Ishikawa, *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa (Hot Days in Okinawa)* (Kyoto: Foil, 2013), n.p.g.

1982 book from publication.[502] Although the *Atsuki hibi in Camp Hansen* subjects may have objected to publication of Ishikawa's material, a survey of the images nonetheless leads to the impression that her subjects were more than willing to be photographed at the time. The dispute was thus perhaps an issue of failed communication regarding Ishikawa's intention for the images. Nevertheless, the incident reminds us that regardless of the level of intimacy achieved (which is considerable in this project), the photographer is always to some extent distanced from her subject.

In comparison with the photographers discussed so far, it could be argued that Ishikawa has received fewer public accolades. This, however, does not diminish the quality or importance of her work, but instead signals her marginality not only as an Okinawan, but also as a woman working in what was until recently a male dominated industry. This is not to make too pointed a criticism of the Japanese photography and high art mainstream, but rather to bring attention to the unique sociopolitical perspective from which Ishikawa works. Ishikawa was born in Ōgimi village in the rural north of Okinawa Island. Her formative years were punctuated by American control of the territory: 1953, the year of her birth, was marked by the Japanese government's official ceding of the territory to the American military, and in 1972, around the time she graduated from high school, Okinawa was returned to Japanese rule.[503] It is therefore understandable that she cites the American presence and its effects on Okinawa as her main motivation for pursuing a career in photography. In 1971 she witnessed an Okinawan policeman burn to death during a local protest against the planned continuation of American bases after Reversion. The policeman had been hit by 'a bottle full of gasoline' presumably thrown by one of the Okinawan protestors (although not necessarily with intent to harm the officer) and 'just lay down and

[502] Taro Amano, "Comments About Mao Ishikawa's Photo Collection "Fences, Okinawa"," in *Ishikawa Mao shashinshū = Fences, Okinawa / Ishikawa Mao ; [Kanshūsha Nakazato Isao, Kuraishi Shino]*, *Okinawa shashinka shirīzu, Ryūkyū retsuzō ; Dai 5-kan.* (Tokyo: Miraisha, 2010), 149.
[503] Ayelet Zohar, "Okinawa-Philadelphia-Tokyo: The Specifity and Complexity of Mao Ishikawa's Photographic Work," *Trans-Asia Photography Review* 2, no. 2 (2012).

died' in front of Ishikawa.[504] This experience led her to question how she might address the issue of conflict in Okinawa; the answer was through photography.[505] In order to do this, Ishikawa attended a 1974 workshop in Tokyo run by some of Japan's top photographers, including Tōmatsu, whose work in particular was to have a lasting influence. Since then she has held many exhibitions and published thirteen books. It is only in more recent times, however, that Ishikawa has gained national and international prestige, with her work having been acquired by some of Japan's top galleries. In 2004, Ishikawa's images were exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art in New York and at the Kunsthaus Graz in Austria. In 2011 she received the Sagamihara Photographic Award for her series entitled *Fences, Okinawa.*[506]

By embedding herself in the black entertainment areas of the base town and by photographing what she observed, Ishikawa tried to erode the oppositional relations she felt had brought about incidents such as the death of the police officer that she witnessed in her youth. The result is a remarkable depiction of intimacies between African American GIs and Japanese/Okinawan women that provides a strong challenge to the hand-wringing over racial purity and supposed collapse of moral standards that had historically accompanied this issue. Such concerns were the particular discursive reserve of Japanese patriarchy, which saw these relations on the one hand as emasculation but on the other as an opportunity (often with economic benefits) to deploy the working class women regarded by the elite as socially dispensable bulwarks against the supposed threat of interracial sex. In this light, we can perhaps attribute Ishikawa's gender as a key contributing factor to her compassionate depiction of the relations, maligned by the mainstream, between Okinawan/Japanese women and African American men. This is not to attribute her depiction to a simplistic gender stereotype of feminine softness and emotionality, nor is it to equate the feminine with the domestic. Rather, Ishikawa's gender, age, and physical appearance granted her access to a social

[504] Ishikawa, cited in Mitchell, "Okinawa Shutterbug Captures Varied Reactions to Hinomaru."
[505] Ibid.
[506] Ishikawa, *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa (Hot Days in Okinawa)*, n.p.g.

milieu in which sexual relations between American men and Okinawan/Japanese women were the norm and, moreover, were seen to empower the women involved. Her 'interior' positioning allowed her to depict the intimacy that marked many of these relations in a way that would have been impossible for a Japanese or even Okinawan man. Her use of the domestic interior is a characteristic feature of her work that is unique amongst photographic depictions of the base town. The base town space was understandably depicted in the work of other photographers, often mainland Japanese males, as exterior. In Tōmatsu's material, for example, there was generally an emphasis on the streets and landscapes of the base or its environs. Any focus on interpersonal relations sought to represent this as emblematic of American neocolonialist occupation and its social impact.

As the dispute with her subjects referred to above suggests, however, there were limits to Ishikawa's insider status. These stemmed from her self-assigned role as photographic documenter, a role that inherently entails a certain psychological distance from the subject. Although the images in *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa* often display the features of what we might call a snapshot style of photography, her approach in fact differs from that genre in that she does not make the total emotional investment in her images that is characteristic of the amateur photographers who operate in that field. Neither does she comply with the snapshot's deeply codified method of presenting a positive family ideal that accords with strict heteronormative values. In fact, her use of this form of photography to record relationships that violate discursive family norms points to the manner in which she has taken base town photography into new territory. As a professional photographer, Ishikawa worked with a public audience in mind, and thus had an explicit awareness and intentionality regarding the political nature of her work. This political motivation was, however, also deeply personal since as an Okinawan she sought through photographing intimate relations to understand the complex relations between America, Japan, and her homeland. As an Okinawan woman, she had a level of access to the communities she photographed that was not necessarily available to Japanese mainlanders. Nevertheless, the fact that her subjects made a legal challenge to her public

release of their images – and the fact that she clearly never thought to request their consent – speaks to a certain degree of outsider status. Rather than in any way devaluing her work however, this inside/outside status suggests the balancing act in which all photographers are engaged. In *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa,* Ishikawa bridges the divide between public and private, drawing out the personal in order to collapse discursive binaries of race and gender in the context of Japan, Okinawa, and America. In a unique take on the 'family album,' Ishikawa's series gives voice to the political complexities of cross-cultural relations and reminds us of their deeply personal nature.

The Ideological Nature of the Snapshot Photograph

A particularly instructive way in which to explore the liminal intimacy of the images in *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa* is through a consideration of those images which employ a snapshot aesthetic, a style that is often associated with the domestic, and also with a particularly honest mode of representation. The following image (figure 1), one of the first in the book, is an example.

Figure 1: "Untitled" from *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa* by Ishikawa Mao, 2013.

This photograph contains several aspects of what Catherine Zuromskis has defined as integral to the 'snapshot' photograph.[507] It exhibits technical errors that suggest an amateur: the image is noticeably out of focus, the framing is haphazard, and the tonal contrast is excessive to the degree that it is difficult to make out the facial features of the men. Another aspect is the prominent use of flash, although this is not necessarily an amateur choice, as we have seen in the work of Naitō and Suda (chapters three and five). Unlike the work of those photographers, however, Ishikawa's use of flash seems more an expedient rather than an aesthetic choice – she simply wanted to illuminate a dark scene, which in this instance has produced a rather jarring result. This is not to denigrate

[507] Catherine Zuromskis, *Snapshot Photography: The Lives of Images* (London: The MIT Press, 2013), 27-51.

Ishikawa's proficiency as a photographer: most other images in the series bear the hallmarks of someone with considerable technical skill and impressive aesthetic sensibilities. Rather, this *is* in fact a snapshot. Her decision to include this image and others like it signifies that she deems the subject matter to be so significant as to override the technical flaws that might otherwise have seen it discarded during the editing process. This priority of subject matter over technique is, as Zuromskis contends, a key delineator between the snapshot and the work of a serious photographer, who might generally try to balance both aspects.[508] Because the subject matter is usually of deep personal significance to the person behind the camera, the intention is to record rather than create. This leads us to the question, then, of why the pictured scene is so significant to Ishikawa as to override technical concerns. Given that the image is from a 2013 publication, the decision to include it was therefore likely to have been made around 35 years after the moment of capture. Many of the subjects who appear in this image feature regularly throughout the series, suggesting that Ishikawa regarded them as friends. Perhaps this image was captured during a memorable night out, or to commemorate the return of one of the pictured men from deployment. She might also have felt that the political significance of the Black Power salute enacted by the subjects made this too valuable a document to discard.

Precisely as a result of its technical deficiencies and personal subject matter, the snapshot as conceived thus far can, as in the image above (figure 1), seem to be naively truthful. This leads to an impression of this type of photograph as a more reliable record than other types of 'professional' photography, including the 'aesthetic' photography discussed in the previous chapters. Such a conclusion would seem to logically preclude the influence of broader societal discourses upon the snapshot, essentially implying that this type of photograph has been produced in a sanctified private realm cleanly separated from the public. Leaving aside (as discussed further below) the fact that the notion of home itself is a hegemonic construction, Zuromskis contends that the assumption of the snapshot's truthfulness, one that is continually perpetuated in public discourse

[508] Ibid., 27-8.

through 'media, marketing, and popular entertainment narratives,' belies the fact that this genre of photography is in fact intensely ideological.[509] In fact, 'the potential visual agency of snapshot photography itself is guided by rigorous cultural norms' that are 'almost always' centred around 'representation of the family.'[510]

This association with social norms is also an aspect of Ishikawa's *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa*, which, with its regular use of family snapshot stylistics, reads as a family album. This is in spite of the fact that the subject matter is undoubtedly more transgressive than a standard depiction of the nuclear family. Zoromskis argues that the ideology that historically governed snapshot photography was that of the middle class heteronormative nuclear family, and that the many formal conventions governing this kind of image creation are aimed at projecting the impression of domestic harmony.[511] In Zuromskis' words: 'people take snapshots the way they do because of discursively established notions of what constitutes a good picture on both an individual and a broad social level.'[512]

This does not mean that every snapshot photograph 'tows the conformity line of domestic, harmonious, family-centered representation' but that the extent to which this ideological framework has been mystified means that every snapshot image 'is at least tangentially dependent on this ideology.'[513] On the surface, *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa* clearly does not adhere to traditional norms, whether those of the broader Japanese society or those more specific to Okinawa. Ishikawa's depiction takes as its subject the relations between two marginal groups: the doubly marginalised working class Okinawan women and African American soldiers, men who although part of a neocolonial institutional framework in Okinawa, were themselves marginalised both within that framework and also as transient interlopers in Okinawa. The 'family' depicted in the images is thus not always one of blood or marital relations, but more often

[509] Ibid., 63.
[510] Ibid., 34.
[511] Ibid., 63.
[512] Ibid., 62.
[513] Ibid.

that of a close knit group of friends and people in romantic and/or sexual relations. Most striking are the repeated depictions of relations between Okinawan/Japanese women and black men, as well as the children of these relations. Also transgressive in the above image (figure 1) is the Black Power salute given to the camera. For the men, this gesture undoubtedly signifies support for black civil rights, while for the women it is perhaps a gesture of conscious defiance against mainstream disapproval of cross-racial sexual and romantic relations. There is therefore a tension in the series that arises between the mainstream ideological underpinnings of the snapshot genre that Ishikawa often employs and her own subversive ideological intention for the series. On the one hand, she has provided an 'insider' perspective both through her deliberate insertion into this 'family,' and utilised the conventions of snapshot photography to depict this, while on the other she looks to break down prevailing family norms through her choice of subject matter. This tension produces an ambiguity to the representational meaning of her work, an ambiguity that leads to a complex, and at times unstable, meaning of 'family.'

The Intimate Domesticity of Transgressive Relationships

In the text that accompanies *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa* Ishikawa recounts how her own fraternisation with African American servicemen often drew disapproval from her compatriots:

> I sometimes noticed the fellow Okinawans and Japanese tourists looking at me when I would walk down the street in Naha City with my military boyfriend, arm-in-arm. Their faces seemed to say I was some kind of a whore, crazy about Black men who are only good for dancing and sex. But I really didn't care what they thought.[514]

This passage highlights the extent to which racist views of black men persisted in Japan two decades after the end of the Occupation. From the outset, African American servicemen were placed (just above Japanese women) at the lower end of a complex hierarchy of acceptability that largely structured Japanese-American

[514] Ishikawa, *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa (Hot Days in Okinawa)*, n.p.g.

sexual relations during the Occupation and in the decades beyond. George Lipsitz sums this up in the following terms: 'white males have general access to all women, White women are prohibited from sex with non-White men, non-White men have access to non-White women only, and non-White women submit to both non-White and White men.'[515] Underlying this discriminative hierarchy was a concern for racial purity on the part of both the Japanese and the Americans. Many Japanese feared the mingling of African American and Japanese blood as a threat to racial purity. The Americans, on the other hand, were more concerned about white American and Japanese unions.[516] Thus, from the outset American authorities opposed any fraternisation between American servicemen and Japanese women that extended beyond anonymous, transitory sexual encounters with women working as prostitutes. This attitude was evidenced by the initial reluctance of military authorities to allow American servicemen to take Japanese wives back to America.[517] Additionally, discussion of miscegenation was made a taboo topic as demonstrated by SCAP's (Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers) censoring of public discourse about mixed blood children. A notable instance of this censorship was the firing of a Japanese radio announcer who enthusiastically announced on air the birth of a Japanese-American baby, praising the birth as a symbol of the harmony between the occupiers and the occupied.[518] A more disturbing example was SCAP's expulsion of an American journalist for reporting on the deliberate starvation of 'more than one hundred babies, many of them "Occupation babies" at two Japanese orphanages.'[519]

The Japanese, perhaps even more strongly than the Americans, also condemned miscegenation. An example of the practical consequences of this attitude was evident in the discovery of the abandoned corpse of a 'half-black and half-

[515] George Lipsitz, ""Frantic to Join…the Japanese Army": Black Soldiers and Civilians Confront the Asia-Pacific War," in *Perilous Memories: The Asia-Pacific War(S)*, ed. Geoffrey M. White T. Fujitani, Lisa Yoneyama (London: Duke University Press, 2001), 371.
[516] Tomoko Tsuchiya, "Interracial Marriages between American Soldiers and Japanese Women at the Beginning of the Cold War," *Journal of American and Canadian Studies* 29(2011): 62-5.
[517] Ibid., 62-70.
[518] Koshiro, *Trans-Pacific Racisms and the U.S. Occupation of Japan*, 159.
[519] Ibid., 162.

Japanese' baby on a train by a noted Japanese philanthropist, Sawada Miki.[520] Sawada was so moved by this experience that she opened the Elizabeth Sanders Home, the first orphanage for mixed blood children in Japan.[521] The abandoned baby was indicative of its mother's desperation in the face of strong hostility in Japanese society towards children of African American and Japanese parentage. A common Japanese perception of black people as being members of a primitive and inferior race largely underscored their hostility towards these babies, who were considered a threat to Japanese purity.[522] Of course, white people were also a foreign race in Japan. However, as Michael Molasky argues, discourse tended to distinguish between black and white Americans in favour of white people, conceiving African Americans as closer to nature while white people were primarily 'cultural beings.'[523] Molasky demonstrates the tendency for Japanese authors to emphasise the corporeal nature of black people, and thus their strong connection to the natural world, at the expense of demonstrating any agency or intellect. Nobel Prize winning author Ōe Kenzaburō critiqued this prevailing attitude in his 1957 story *The Catch* (*Shiiku* – sometimes translated as *Prize Stock*). In this work, a stranded African American GI is depicted as figuratively voiceless and primal, the latter indicated by repeated references to his odour and one notable reference to the magnificence of his penis.[524] By emphasising this, Ōe's intention was to lay bare the ugliness of these tropes, and more broadly to criticise what he saw as mainstream Japan's problematic attitudes towards alterity. Further, through the proxies of the small children who form a relationship with the captured GI, the adults of the village, and the town official, the story also problematises accepted power relations in Japanese society, and, like Ishikawa's work, breakdowns binaries of Japan/Other.

Derogatory views of black people were not only symptomatic of a concern for racial purity, but also part of a broader discourse about Japanese identity in the wake of humiliating defeat at the hands of the Americans. Sherick Hughes has

[520] Ibid., 163.
[521] Ibid.
[522] Ibid., 164-7.
[523] Molasky, *The American Occupation of Japan and Okinawa: Literature and Memory*, 75.
[524] Kenzaburō Ōe, "The Catch," in *The Catch and Other War Stories*, ed. Shōichi Saeki (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1981).

argued that black people became a foil against which the Japanese state rallied the peoples' spirits towards rebuilding. In the postwar era, it was difficult to laud the racial superiority of the Japanese vis-à-vis the rest of the world, and especially in regards to the West. As Hughes puts it: 'In the shadow of defeat, the Japanese could not look upon White Westerners and call them unintelligent.'[525] Although the Japanese had to accept the superiority of white Americans in the postwar era, African Americans made an easy target. These attitudes on the part of some Japanese are clearly evident in the above quoted passage from Ishikawa, both in her memory of being looked upon as a 'whore' and 'sex-crazed' and, perhaps more pointedly, in the assumption that 'Black men are only good for dancing and sex.'[526]

Given that Ishikawa's book depicts intimate relations between black men and Japanese women in the base towns, it is unsurprising to find sensual depictions of her male subjects. Yet, as the following image demonstrates (figure 2), unlike the dominant discourses referred to above, aggressive sexuality is not a defining aspect of these men. While present, in Ishikawa's photographs sexuality is almost always depicted in the context of an intimate encounter, an expression of private intimacy between individuals.

[525] Sherick A. Hughes, "The Convenient Scapegoating of Blacks in Postwar Japan: Shaping the Black Experience Abroad," *Journal of Black Studies* 33, no. 3 (2003): 340.
[526] Ishikawa, *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa (Hot Days in Okinawa)*, n.p.g.

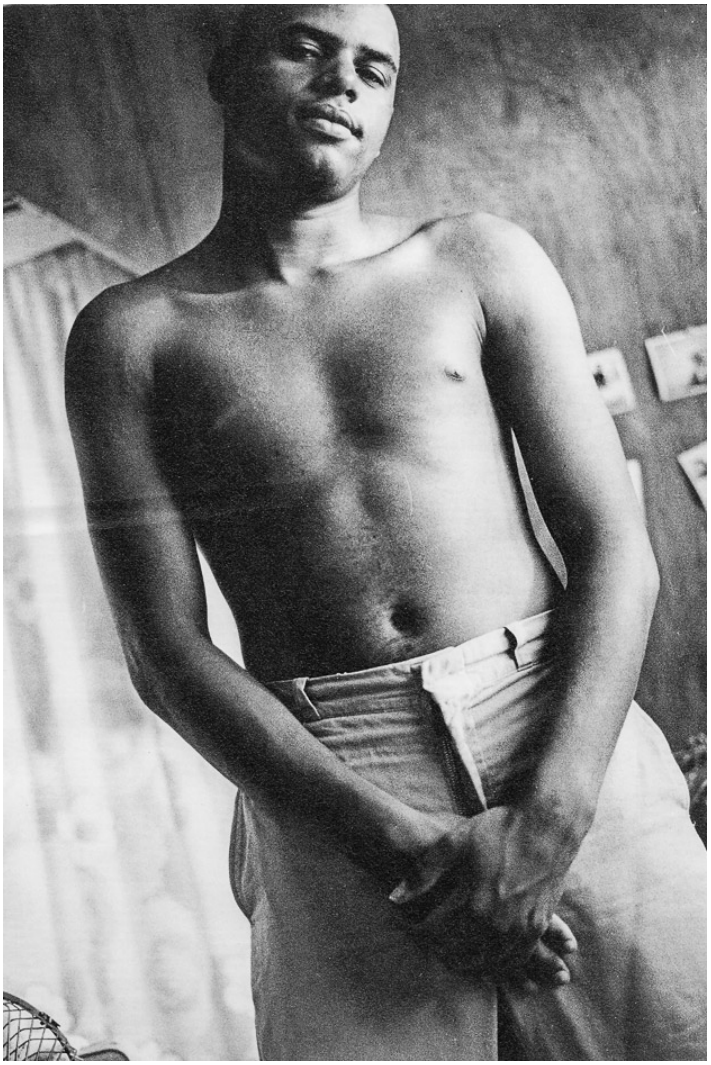

Figure 2: "Untitled" from *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa* by Ishikawa Mao, 2013.

In the image above, interestingly, Ishikawa has utilised similar framing techniques to that of Tōmatsu (discussed in chapter seven): the central figure fills the frame, and the camera is at a low angle, resulting in a sense of intimacy and masculine power similar to that depicted in Tōmatsu's images. The type of intimacy evoked, however, is a decidedly different kind – the camera is panned back enough to capture the man's naked torso bathed in the soft diffuse light that filters through the windows into what we assume is a bedroom. The low perspective is perhaps that of Ishikawa reclined in bed, waiting for the man to join her, an impression reinforced by the sensual expression with which he regards the camera, and by extension, Ishikawa herself. While the image emphasises the man's sex appeal and the chemistry between Ishikawa and her subject, there is little that conforms with the discourses of African American

animalism critiqued in *The Catch*. Rather, the photograph depicts a kind of natural youthful sensuality. The position of the man's hands perhaps suggests the concealment of his sexual arousal.

We might link the particularity of this image to broader discourses surrounding Japanese women and African American men that emerged in Japan in the decade or so after this image was taken. Precisely because of long standing taboos, for some Japanese women sexual relations with African American men came to constitute an act of self-liberation. On the surface this seems to be how Ishikawa and her fellow bar workers also felt. In *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa* she cites comments from the barmaids she knew: '"I love black people!" "What's wrong with living my own life as I want?" "What's wrong with enjoying sex?"' This was evidence that 'the women in those bars were living with confidence.'[527] Looking through the images in the book, it is difficult not to come away with this impression. The following photograph (figure 3), which appears of the cover of the collection, demonstrates the casual intimacy between the women and the men who feature in the book.

[527] Ibid., n.p.g.

Figure 3: “Untitled” from *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa* by Ishikawa Mao, 2013.

This image is at once touchingly intimate in its portrayal of the emotional and physical closeness between the individuals, and radically transgressive in its challenge to social norms. In particular, it resists stereotypical binaries of American coloniser and oppressed Japanese/Okinawan women, where the woman’s body is seen to symbolise that of a violated nation. Here the relaxed and amused expressions denote a casual encounter of equals – between subjects, and between subject and photographer. Sexual intimacy is clearly suggested by the way the figures lay atop of each other, posing which in fact intimates the overlapping of sexual partners, or even group sex. Although such practices might shock supporters of hegemonic norms on a number of levels, here they are naturalised by the softness of this portrayal. This is a result not only of the subject matter and the interplay between subjects and photographer, but also, as in the previous image, of the low contrast caused by the diffuse light filtering through the window. Here, the interracial liaisons so agonised over in mainstream discourses of the postwar era are imbued with a strong sense of domesticity.

In the following two images (figures 4 and 5), the purportedly illicit relationships of Okinawan women and African American men are taken outdoors, on public display.

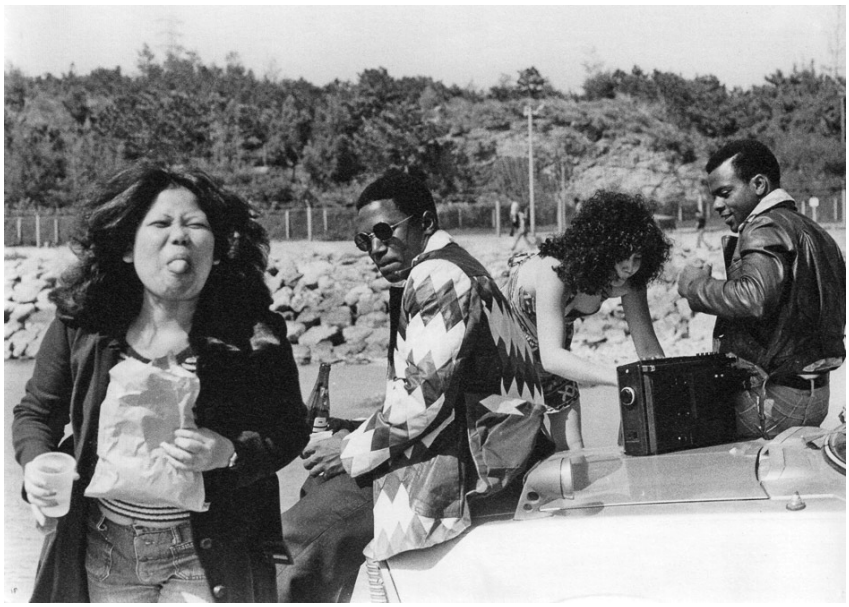

Figure 4: "Untitled" from *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa* by Ishikawa Mao, 2013.

Figure 5: "Untitled" from *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa* by Ishikawa Mao, 2013.

Although appearing in different sections of the book, the two images seem to depict the same outing: each features the same four individuals wearing largely the same clothes. Here, the women do not shy from exhibiting their liberating relationships with black men publicly, enjoying time together listening to music at the beach. These photographs display a more sophisticated composition style in comparison to the snapshot image first discussed in this chapter (figure 1). In figure 4, the eye is drawn from left to right along the succession of human subjects, although the woman playfully poking her tongue out for the camera punctuates this movement. While in both images the people featured are facing opposite directions, the harmonious counterbalance with which they occupy the frame creates the impression of personal connection rather than discord. As is the case in figures 2 and 3, the light here is diffuse, producing gentle contrast and a softer mood. These aspects of composition and lighting signify the hand of a skilled photographer applied to what is essentially a snapshot of fun times at the beach. In this sense they are broadly representative of the overall impression of the *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa* collection, in that they balance the tension between professional and amateur in a way that corresponds to the public and private. We might note again the importance of Ishikawa's position in this respect as insider/outsider and the fact that, although she is part of the community she photographs, her conscious role as recorder prevents her full immersion.

Challenging Discourses of the Black Male Body

Until the time that Ishikawa produced the images for *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa*, as noted above, common tropes in the representations of black men in Japan were those of primal sensuality and physicality. These men were seen as a threat to purity, making the mingling of Japanese and African American bodies a taboo. For the women in Ishikawa's images, and indeed for Ishikawa herself, the breaking of these taboos was associated with personal liberation from traditional patriarchal norms.

As John Russell points out, much derogatory discourse about interracial relations had been propagated by Japanese men in order to 'resist demasculinization.'[528] Russell writes in relation to the late 1970s and 80s attitudes of young Japanese women who preferred relationships with African American men. A notable fictional example of these women was found in the writing of Yamada Eimi (b.1959), who wrote explicit accounts of such encounters. One of her best known narratives, 'Bedtime Eyes' ('*Beddotaimu aizu*'), depicts a relationship between a Japanese cabaret singer and an African American soldier. As in other Yamada texts, the storyline places a strong emphasis on embodied sexuality from the feminine perspective, positioning the sexual desire of the woman protagonist as paramount. Nina Cornyetz (who is not without criticism of Yamada) writes that Yamada's endeavour is one of 'rewriting "womanhood"' from the margins of Japanese society by inverting gendered relations of power in sexual desire.[529] Yamada's work to some extent countered dominant representations of feminine sexuality in Japan, including in modern pornography, that 'overwhelmingly portray women as the victims of rape (or at least the reticent objects of male sexual desire).'[530] By focusing on women as the dominant actors in male/female sexual relations, she sought to defy 'common contemporary Japanese depictions of woman as mother, woman as passive (surrendered) object, and woman as male property.'[531] In Yamada's narrative, sex is an insatiable need that drives her female protagonist in predatory fashion towards African American men, who are largely rendered without any discernable subjectivity.

This characterisation of the predatory Japanese woman was a contributing factor to what became known as the 'Yellow Cabs' phenomenon. This was the name given to middle class women (including Yamada herself[532]) who travelled to Japan's base towns, and also Hawai'i, in order to meet and have sex with western

[528] John G. Russell, "Consuming Passions: Spectacle, Self- Transformation, and the Commodification of Blackness in Japan," *Positions* 6, no. 1 (1998): 156-9.
[529] Nina Cornyetz, "Power and Gender in the Narratives of Yamada Eimi," in *The Woman's Hand: Gender and Theory in Japanese Women's Writing*, ed. Paul Gordon Schalow and Janet A. Walker (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 430.
[530] Ibid., 429.
[531] Ibid.
[532] Russell, "Consuming Passions: Spectacle, Self- Transformation, and the Commodification of Blackness in Japan," 123.

men, African Americans included. On the surface, this reversal of traditional gender and racial binaries seems a welcome example of liberation for Japanese women. While in some ways this might have been the case, the source of the very term 'Yellow Cabs' speaks to the limits of any newfound freedom. As Karen Kelsky writes, the name was apparently conceived by 'American men who supposedly saw these Japanese women as "yellow" and as easy to "ride" as taxis.'[533] Coverage in what Kelsky notes was the 'male-dominated Japanese media' was equally prurient, particularly in 'low-brow' men's magazines, which excoriated these women as 'sexually insatiable sluts in thrall to the black phallus.'[534] The women, for their part, argued that their preference constituted a critique of Japanese men, whom they claimed to be the negative opposite to the western man. Westerners were said to be chivalrous, mature, and respectful, while Japanese men were characterised as 'childish and disgusting,' 'bad mannered,' 'fake and dishonest,' and 'narrow minded.'[535]

The kind of freedom that resulted from the shift in gender dynamics described above is clearly in many ways problematic. As Cornyetz argues, the discourse of sexual liberation as characterised by Yamada and others ultimately upholds systems of power in heterosexual relationships in which men and women are placed within 'classical binary structures of dominance/submission.'[536] Further, the emphasis on sex reinforces long existent patriarchal associations of women with nature, ultimately reinforcing a Japanese patriarchy that places the Japanese male as a 'normative center of the universe, against whom all others obtain meaning only relatively.' [537] Amongst these 'others' are African American men, who Russell argues are largely rendered silent in this discourse, so that 'sex with the Black Other is depicted' by the women 'as a self-transforming, inspirational, essentially masturbatory experience, since it is only the Japanese

[533] Karen Kelsky, *Women on the Verge: Japanese Women, Western Dreams*, ed. H.D. Harootunian Rey Chow, Masao Miyoshi, Asia Pacific: Culture, Politics, and Society (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 134.
[534] Ibid.
[535] These are the descriptions used by young Japanese women interviewed by Kelsky, cited in ibid., 138.
[536] Cornyetz, "Power and Gender in the Narratives of Yamada Eimi," 438.
[537] Ibid., 428.

woman who is portrayed as benefiting physically and emotionally from the encounter.' [538] Lastly, Cornyetz notes that the depiction of female sexuality was often that of uncontrollable bodily need, which plays into the stereotype of the 'dangerous, lusty woman' who must be controlled, in this case by the male dominated Japanese media.[539] We can see how this discourse had permeated Okinawa's base towns in the comment by Ishikawa cited earlier in this chapter, in which she interpreted the gaze of other Japanese as an accusation that she was 'some kind of a whore, crazy about black men.'[540] The idea that she is 'crazy' about African American men taps into another trope embedded within the discourse of interracial relations that characterised sex with black men as 'blindly addictive', and which, like any addiction, had the capacity to lead unsuspecting women into self-destruction. [541] The motif of addiction is ultimately another means by which the discourse disempowers women by denying them the agency of choice; instead, they are mere slaves to bodily urges.

Both Ishikawa and the women she photographed described a feeling of liberation in their relations with African American servicemen. It has been noted above, however, that, unlike the manner in which they feature in the work of Yamada and others, the men in *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa* are not depicted in an overtly sexualised manner that effaces subjectivity. The second image discussed in this chapter (figure 2) depicting a topless man looking seductively at the camera, is the most obviously sexual in Ishikawa's series, yet even this image suggests a sense of personal connection. In the following (figure 6), the same man is photographed from a similar angle and, as suggested by the similarity of the surroundings in both, seemingly at the same time as figure 2.

[538] Russell, "Consuming Passions: Spectacle, Self- Transformation, and the Commodification of Blackness in Japan," 129.
[539] Cornyetz, "Power and Gender in the Narratives of Yamada Eimi," 432.
[540] Ishikawa, *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa (Hot Days in Okinawa)*, n.p.g.
[541] Russell, "Consuming Passions: Spectacle, Self- Transformation, and the Commodification of Blackness in Japan," 135.

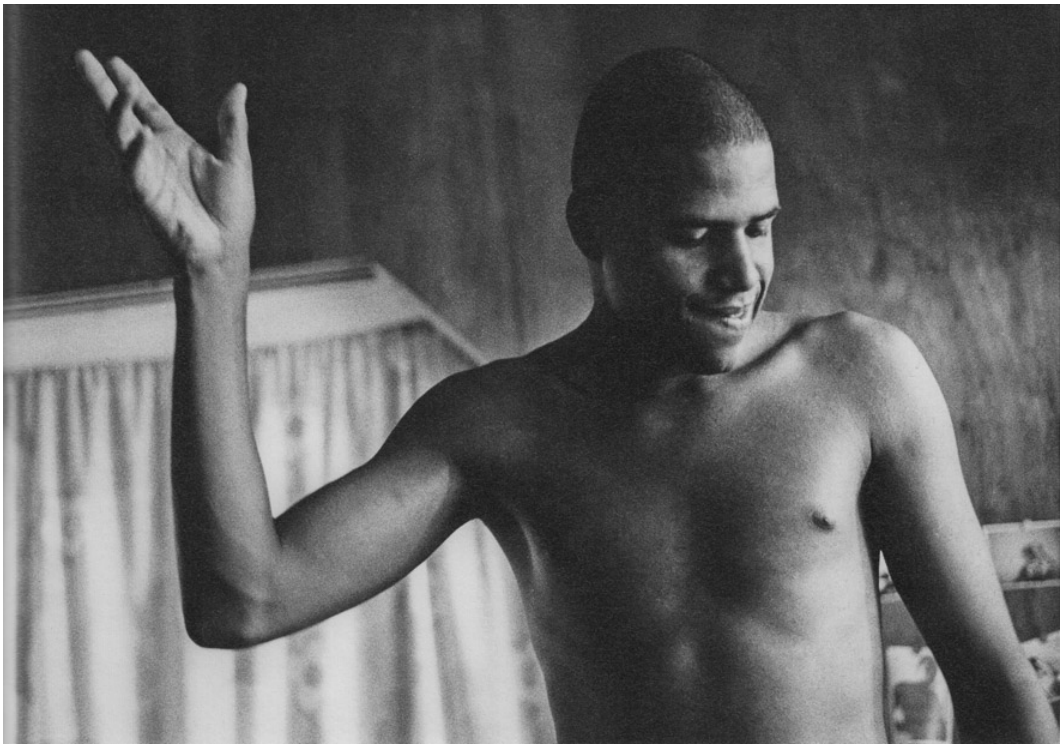

Figure 6: “Untitled” from *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa* by Ishikawa Mao, 2013.

In some ways we might consider this image to reduce the sense of the subject’s personality – he looks away from the camera and is posed in a manner that brings attention to his body rather than his eyes. His gesture has a statuesque quality that fills the frame and draws attention to the formal qualities of his physique, reducing the sense of him as a subjective being. Yet any objectification is not gratuitously sexual but simply that of the artistically conceived photograph. Here the personalised appeal of the snapshot aesthetic used in many of the other images in *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa* has been deployed to create a carefully composed, poetic image. In this we get a sense of Ishikawa as photographer – this is not just a photograph for the family album but also for a gallery wall. There is, furthermore, enough of the man’s expression that is visible as he gazes at the ground to provoke some curiosity, and to provide some context for the gesture. The viewer can see that he is captured in transition from one state to the next, producing the candid nature also associated with the snapshot. Like many others in the series, the image therefore evidences the tension between snapshot and photograph as work of art, which conceived more broadly, is also that between private and public space.

A significant aspect of the above image (figure 6) is that, in contrast to the many popular representations of hypermasculinised African American bodies in Japan (and the West), the man depicted has a relatively average physique. This works against the strong discursive association of black men with sex, the primitive, and nature that led to a concomitant emphasis on physical size and, most acutely, on the size of the penis. Franz Fanon observed how when reading the French writer Michel Cournot's *Martinesque*, 'one is no longer aware of the Negro but only of a penis; the Negro is eclipsed. He is turned into a penis. He is a penis.'[542] The alleged distinguishing feature of the black penis is its size, which, Russell argues, is indirectly alluded to in the constant emphasis on the physicality and power of male black bodies. This was particularly true of the discourses around Japanese women/African American liaisons, where the men were often depicted as 'big game' for predatory women, 'physically superior but intellectually inferior quarry.'[543]

The depiction of African American masculinity in *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa*, however, is of a different order. As seen in figures 2 and 6, the man's physical proportions are relatively average, and there is no particular emphasis on physical strength and no allusion of any kind to the penis. Instead, as in the following image (figure 7), there is often a sense of vulnerability and personal connection:

[542] Franz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 170-1.
[543] Russell, "Consuming Passions: Spectacle, Self- Transformation, and the Commodification of Blackness in Japan," 128.

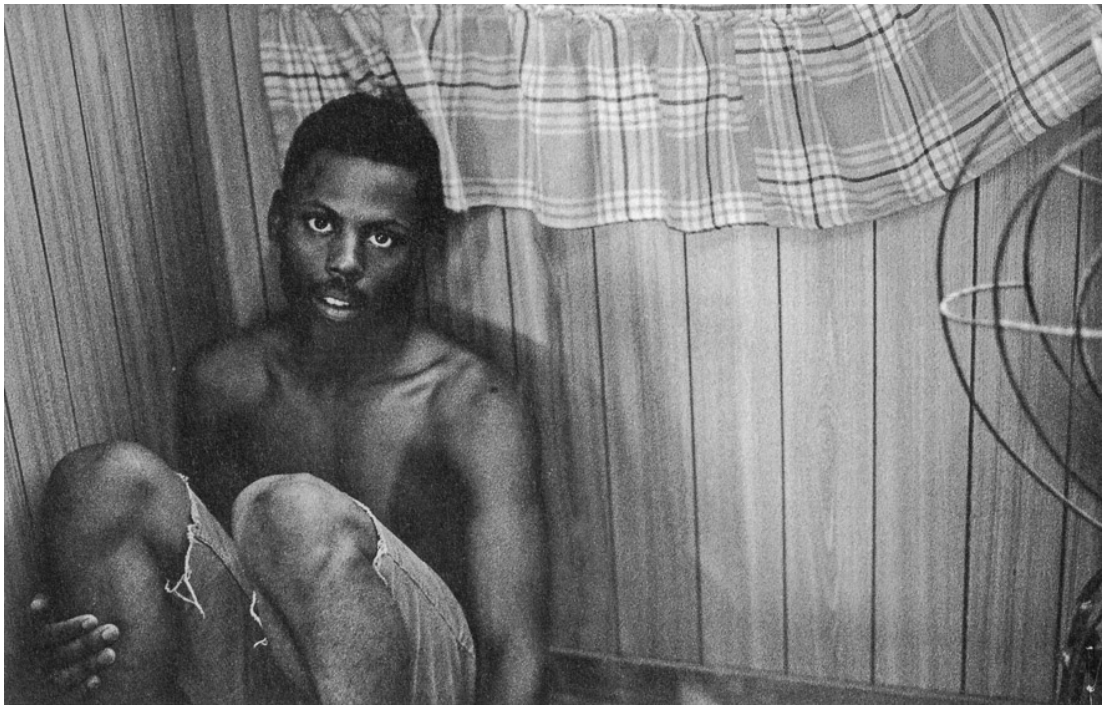

Figure 7: “Untitled” from *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa* by Ishikawa Mao, 2013.

The angle of view is reversed to that of figure 2, in which Ishikawa utilised a low camera position that emphasised her subject’s physicality and also intimated her reclined position. If we think in terms of the female ‘hunter’ alluded to above, the high perspective and tight sense of space might reflect the dominant hunter standing over her captive prey. Certainly, the man is not portrayed as a powerful presence – he has a relatively slight physique, his knees are drawn into his chest in what might be considered a self-protective manner, and he is seated on the floor – his posture is one of vulnerability. This is also true of the following (figure 8), in which the subject is apparently photographed unawares.

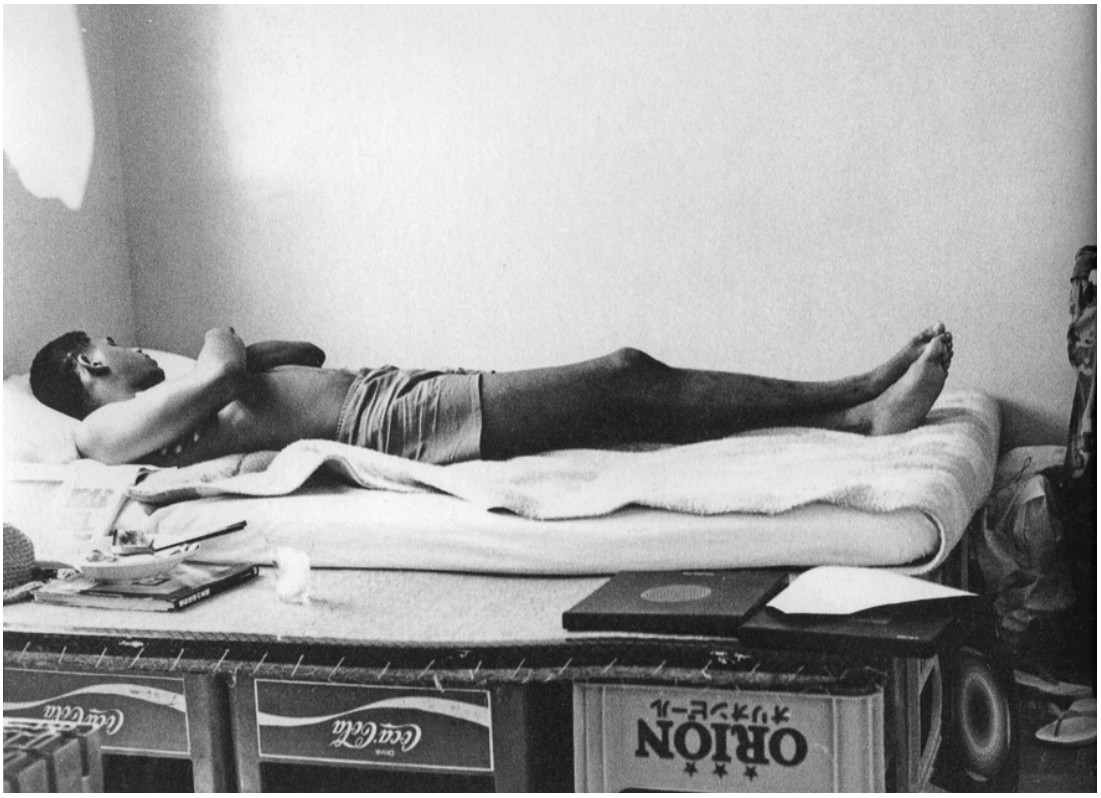

Figure 8: "Untitled" from *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa* by Ishikawa Mao, 2013.

While the scantiness of the man's attire does add a certain sensuality to the image, this is of a domestic kind experienced in everyday life. This domesticity is signified by the bowl of food (a half finished piece of toast on top) perched on a half read book (perhaps of photos or art), a glass filled with ice, and what appear to be long play record cases. Further context is added by the makeshift nature of the bed, a cheap arrangement supported by soft drink and beer crates that are presumably refuse from the base town nightclubs. Interestingly, these crates display the advertising logos of Coca-Cola, an ubiquitously American beverage, and Orion, one of Okinawa's most popular beers. We might interpret the coexistence of these two symbols in this context as more broadly reflecting a similar amity between the American men and Okinawan women that are the subject of *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa.* The makeshift nature of the bed, and the Japanese title on the spine of the book at left of frame suggest that the bed belongs to this man's local girlfriend, perhaps Ishikawa herself. The man's body is not overtly sexualised, and the diffuse interior lighting creates a gentle mood. There is a sense of reverence to this scene, created by the horizontal separation between the darker tones of the ground and bed's support structure and the

lighter space above the mattress. The man's dark skin contrasts with the lighter sheets, while the darkness below him creates a sense of levitation, as if his body is raised up on display. Here we witness Ishikawa's respect for the black male body, a respect that, in refusing to overemphasise the men's masculinity, is connected to the lover's desire for personal intimate connection rather than objectifying lust.

Unconventional Domesticities in the Base Town

The images in *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa* were produced at a time when relations between mainstream Japan and African Americans were undergoing a significant change in form and emphasis. Russell notes how the postwar generation of Japanese 'leftist writers and intellectuals' had been deeply interested in the critique of white America offered by the American Civil Rights Movement, black nationalism, and African Independence movements.[544] This changed in the 1980s as Japan entered postmodernity, when the idea of 'Black Power' became disconnected from its political and ideological origins and became instead an object for consumption. As Russell writes: 'in Postmodern Japan, *burakku pawā* (black power) does not so much signify political and economic empowerment as the perceived black domination of the athletic, entertainment, and sexual landscape.'[545] Writers like Yamada and the 'Yellow Cab' phenomenon most notably embodied the new discourse regarding black sexuality. Russell sees this shift as attributable to changes in America that saw black culture become more acceptable to the white mainstream.[546] Because of this changed attitude in the US, there was an increase in the flow of black culture into Japan through the mediating spaces of the base town, particularly in the form of music and fashion.[547]

It is interesting to place Ishikawa's *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa* in this context – working in the mid to late 1970s, she was conceivably immersed in an environment in which the political and ideological movements around black

[544] Ibid., 120.
[545] Ibid., 121.
[546] Ibid.
[547] Ibid., 122.

identity accompanied increasing exposure to African American music and fashion. Certainly, if we consider the first image discussed in this chapter (figure 1) we not only notice its posed and rough snapshot aesthetic, but also the fact that both the African American men and Japanese/Okinawan women are performing the Black Power salute for the camera. Elsewhere, we see the influence of culture in the form of the Afro haircut, a phenomenon that combines identity politics and fashion in its embrace of the natural state of African hair. The following images (figures 9 and 10) are examples.

Figure 9: "Untitled" from *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa* by Ishikawa Mao, 2013.

Figure 10: "Untitled" from *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa* by Ishikawa Mao, 2013.

While it is possible that the women captured in both images (or perhaps it is the same woman) are of mixed race and possess naturally African-style tight curls, it is equally likely that significant effort has gone towards attaining this hairstyle. Taken in the context of *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa* and the broader discourses being discussed, this speaks to the level of enthusiasm for African American culture in the base towns. In the following image (figure 11), which seems to be taken in one of the bars but might also be a domestic interior, we can see a woman standing in front of a wall decorated with eroticised afro-centric artwork.

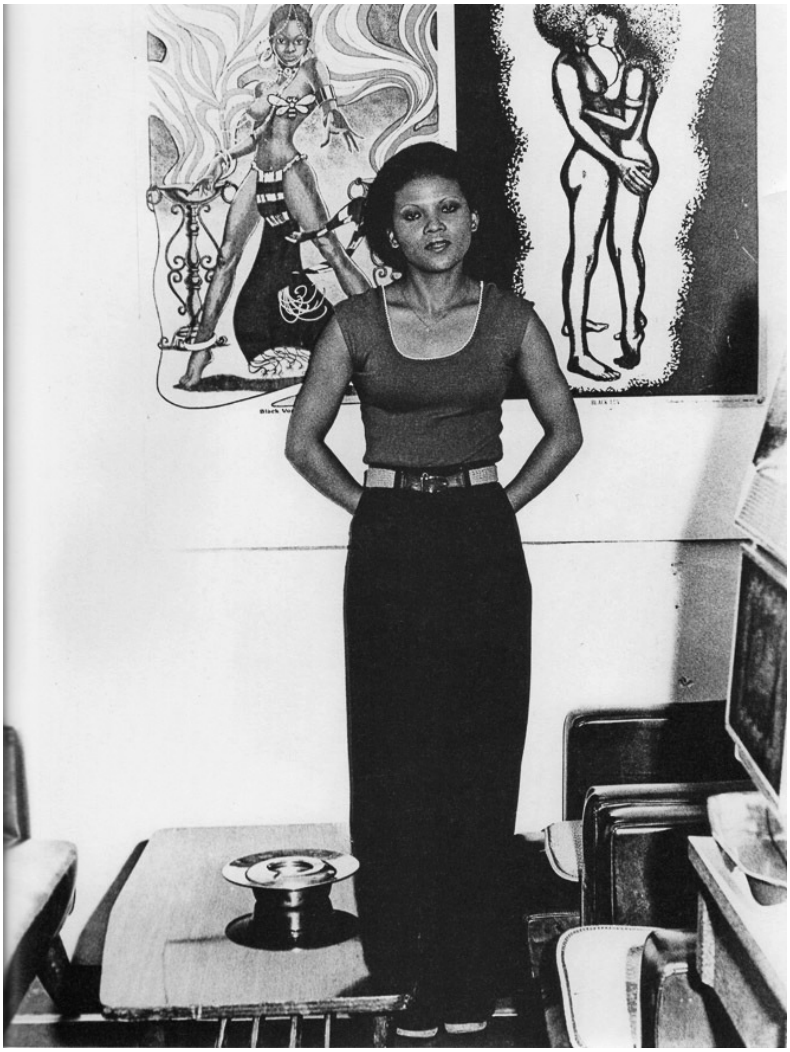

Figure 11: "Untitled" from *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa* by Ishikawa Mao, 2013.

Given that the majority of base town images featured in *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa* are portraits, either posed or candid, it is difficult to directly see the extent to which the popular African American music permeated the lives of the women

who frequented the black entertainment areas. Yet, other cultural products provide clear evidence that the funk and soul music already so popular in America had become a feature of these areas at the time Ishikawa worked in the bars.

The following three images (figures 12, 13, and 14), depicting African American men and a Japanese woman dancing and listening to funk music in an Okinawan base town bar, are stills from a 1974 documentary film entitled *Gokushiteki erosu: Renka 1974 (Extreme Private Eros: Love Song 1974)* by mainland Japanese director Hara Kazuo.

Figure 12: Still from *Gokushiteki erosu: Renka 1974*, by Hara Kazuo, 1974.

Figure 13: Still from *Gokushiteki erosu: Renka 1974*, by Hara Kazuo, 1974.

Figure 14: Still from *Gokushiteki erosu: Renka 1974*, by Hara Kazuo, 1974.

The images depict a Japanese woman named Sugako, a mainland feminist who was a lover of Hara's estranged wife Takeda Miyuki. Sugako, like Takeda (Takeda is the main subject of the film), had come to Okinawa to live and work in the bars as an expression of her sexual freedom. Taken by a mainland Japanese man who

presumably has had little previous contact with African American culture, the movie sequence from which these stills have been taken is somewhat disturbing and intimidating in nature. This atmosphere is produced through the use of low angle, tight proximity to the subjects, and unconventional lighting, with what appear to be singular spotlights illuminating the faces of his subjects from below. Shaky camera movement also contributes to the disturbing effect. While the film mainly consists of intimate and personal footage of Takeda in various circumstances, including her relationships with a female lover and an African American soldier named Paul (with whom she has a 3 week relationship), it is the depiction of the Okinawan base town that is relevant to this discussion of Ishikawa's work.

The most striking similarity between *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa* and *Gokushiteki erosu: Renka 1974* is the way each works to collapse the binary between private and public through the publication of transgressive intimacies. This was the explicit aim on the part of Hara, who intended to challenge the predominance of 'familial imperialism [*kazoku teikokushigi*]' that was seen by many Japanese activists in the 1960s and 70s as a key source of repression.[548] By depicting deeply intimate scenes and relationships that defied prevailing norms of the heterosexual nuclear family and by making his own unconventional family intimacies public, Hara sought to break the hermetic seal that enclosed domestic space. The film depicts the daily conflict between Takeda and Sugako (Takeda's female lover); Takeda's relationship with an African American soldier; and (disturbing) relations between a 14 year old Okinawan bargirl called Chi Chi and an African American man. The film culminates with the graphic depiction of Takeda's unassisted birth of a mixed race baby, as well as the birth of Hara's child conceived with his new partner Sachiko. As he put it later: 'I thought that if I could put my own family under the camera, all our emotions, our privacy, I wondered if I might break taboos about the family.'[549] Also of interest is Takeda, the film's central protagonist, who worked as a bargirl in Okinawa and a topless

[548] Hara, cited in Setsu Shigematsu, "Intimacies of Imerialism and Japanese-Black Transgression: Militarised Occupations in Okinawa and Beyond," *Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific*, no. 37 (2015).
[549] Hara, cited in ibid.

dancer in Tokyo. Setsu Shigematsu speculates that this choice of vocation was motivated not only by the need to make money, but also as a feminist act which sought to break down binaries between 'good/chaste wives' and 'bad/promiscuous women.' Shigematsu also suggests that Takeda set out to transgress classist assumptions about women who worked as bargirls and in the sex industry.[550] In this sense, Takeda and her lover Sachiko are 'representative of a small number of *ūman ribu* [Japanese Feminist Movement] activists who worked in the sex-entertainment industry (*mizushōbai*) during the early years of the movement.'[551] Despite these seemingly community-minded motivations, Shigematsu ultimately concludes that Takeda was 'more invested in pursuing her own liberation than working for the collective good.'[552]

We might compare Takeda's foray into the base towns with that of Ishikawa's in that both were motivated by personal projects that were at the same time political. Both were ostensible outsiders to the scene in which they inserted themselves, although Ishikawa's rural Okinawan background made this less so in her case. There was a difference, however, in their motivations. Takeda's were overtly and singularly based on feminist values. While there is a clear overlap with feminist issues in her work, Ishikawa's objective, on the other hand, was to understand the full range of complex power relations that marked the base town community. It is likely that Takeda was also to some extent interested in Okinawa's political situation, given Japanese feminist movement expressions of concern for Okinawan prostitutes in base towns. A 1974 pamphlet declared that, 'the prostitutes that are being raped by American soldiers serve as Okinawa's protective floodwall,' and went on to see these women as symbols of the manner in which Okinawa bore the brunt of Japan's occupation by the American military at the time.[553] The pamphlet saw mainland Japan as not merely complicit in, but as a purveyor of, the imperial oppression of Okinawa, with mainland feminists acknowledging their own status as 'women who belong to the class of

[550] Ibid., para.17.
[551] Ibid.
[552] Ibid., para.13.
[553] Cited in ibid., para.12.

oppressors.'[554] Takeda's exit from Okinawa seems to confirm her own status in this regard: disillusioned with her life there, she prepares a pamphlet for distribution among bargirls exhorting them not to 'fall for Black guys with big cock…they will use you and lie to you…don't ever have sympathy for them. They should all be castrated.'[555] She and the filmmakers attempt to hand these pamphlets out to local bargirls, who, to both Takeda and Hara's surprise, are completely indifferent to its message. Takeda tries also to distribute the pamphlets on a busy sidewalk. The viewer is later told that 'local gangsters' physically assaulted Hara, taunting him: 'what can you possibly know about Okinawa?'[556] The couple were then surrounded by a crowd of locals who tore up the pamphlets and threw them away. Bemused by this response, Takeda speculates that it is due to her status as a mainlander.[557]

Takeda's racist overtones towards black men in the pamphlet are a surprise given the awareness that even she as a mainlander must have gained through her base town bar experiences of the black rights movement there. There is evidence of this exposure in another still taken from the film (figure 15).

[554] Cited in ibid., para. 12.
[555] Kazuo Hara, "Gokushiteki erosu: Renka 1974 (Extreme Private Eros: Love Song 1974)," (Japan: Facets Video, 1974).
[556] Ibid.
[557] Ibid.

Figure 15: Still from *Gokushiteki erosu: Renka 1974*, by Hara Kazuo.

There had already been a shift in Japan towards sympathy for the plight of African Americans in the decades after the Second World War. Onishi Yuichiro writes that for the pro-negro activists Nukina Yoshitaka (1911-1985) and Furukawa Hiromi (1927-2012) issues of race were closely linked to their critique of the idyllic version of America propagated in the postwar. They rejected the idea of America as '"a timeless space" endowed with boundless opportunities and promises where one could achieve emancipation from totalitarianism, fundamentalism, and militarism, and called into question the idea of American exceptionalism.'[558] As it did for Tōmatsu (discussed in chapter seven), the existence of racial oppression in America demonstrated to Nukina and Furukawa the hypocrisy of Japan's occupiers who lectured the Japanese on the unassailable virtues of liberal democracy. Onishi argues that it was the Vietnam War that catalysed this moment and furthermore brought Okinawans into contact with the American black rights movement.[559] Also important was the period around Okinawa's reversion to Japanese rule when the extent to which both America and Japan had subjugated the region in pursuit of

[558] Yuichiro Onishi, *Transpacific Antiracism: Afro Asian Solidarity in Twentieth Century Black America, Japan, and Okinawa* (New York: New York University Press, 2013), 116.
[559] Ibid., 138.

neoimperialist agendas became increasingly clear. Okinawa's emergence as an activist centre was the result of both the Reversion and the island chain's role as a central staging post for American military action in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War. The injustice of this war and its impact on Okinawa was collectively opposed by anti-racists, pacifists, anti-imperialists, GIs who deplored the excessive military aggression in Vietnam, and feminists. Representatives of these groups came from mainland Japan, white America, and from Okinawa.[560]

The Vietnam War was increasingly seen by some soldiers, both white and African American, as senseless and brutal, so that by the early 1970s dissent in the ranks concerning this war was rife (this was observed by Tōmatsu, cited in chapter seven).[561] For many in the black activist movement, the brutality of the Vietnam War had a causal connection to the racism that was prevalent within American society. Prominent African American James Baldwin commented that 'a racist society can't but help fight a racist war'[562] while Martin Luther King saw the racialised nature of the war as a logical outcome of a modern society that had lost it ethical moorings:

> We must rapidly begin the shift from being a 'thing-oriented' society to a 'person-oriented' society. When machines and computers, profit-motives and property rights are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered.[563]

According to Onishi, the convergence of activists in Okinawa at this time led to fruitful interchange, especially between the GI Black Power activists, white American peace activists, and Okinawans resisting the presence of the US military on the island. This was particularly true of the late 1960s and early 1970s; that is, in the years leading up to Reversion, during which time 'a

[560] Ibid., 142.
[561] Ibid., 150-2,59-60.
[562] Baldwin, cited in ibid., 152.
[563] Martin Luther King, "A Time to Break Silence," in *I Have a Dream: Writings and Speeches That Changed the World*, ed. James M. Washington (San Francisco: Harper, 1992), 148.

condition of reciprocity…made the practice of transpacific strivings an inculcator of utopian aspirations, revolutionary commitment, and multi-racial coalition building.'[564]

The extent to which these political connections continued to operate at the time of Ishikawa's *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa* is difficult to gauge from her photographs. Nevertheless, a survey of her work indicates that harmonious interrelations continued between the African American GIs and the Okinawan women pictured. While, as noted above, there are a number of activist-themed images and images that transgress mainstream sexual and relationship norms, we also often witness scenes of conventional domesticity, such as in the image below (figure 16).

Figure 16: "Untitled" from *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa* by Ishikawa Mao, 2013.

Like the photographs depicting the women and men enjoying themselves by the seaside discussed above (figures 4 and 5), the initial impression here is of disparate individuals who nevertheless amicably inhabit the same space. This sense of coexistence is attributable to Ishikawa's composition that balances the

[564] Onishi, *Transpacific Antiracism: Afro Asian Solidarity in Twentieth Century Black America, Japan, and Okinawa*, 153.

poses of each human figure. At left, the man (also pictured sitting against the wall in figure 7) and woman good-naturedly stand over their child, perhaps changing a nappy. The apparent bond between the couple, and also their attention to the child, suggests the positive possibilities of the transracial unions that might have been envisaged by the American, Japanese, and Okinawan activists who mingled together in Okinawa around that time. This seems to be an intended message not only for this image, but also for *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa* more broadly. Ishikawa wants to show the viewer other potentialities of cross-cultural encounters besides the conflict and violence she had herself witnessed. She endeavours to provide an alternate view to that of the vilified American, and particularly African Americans, and to dispel the idea that these unions were based only on sex. To confirm this message, the book concludes with the following photograph (figure 17) depicting the same couple and their baby with what looks to be a marriage certificate in hand.

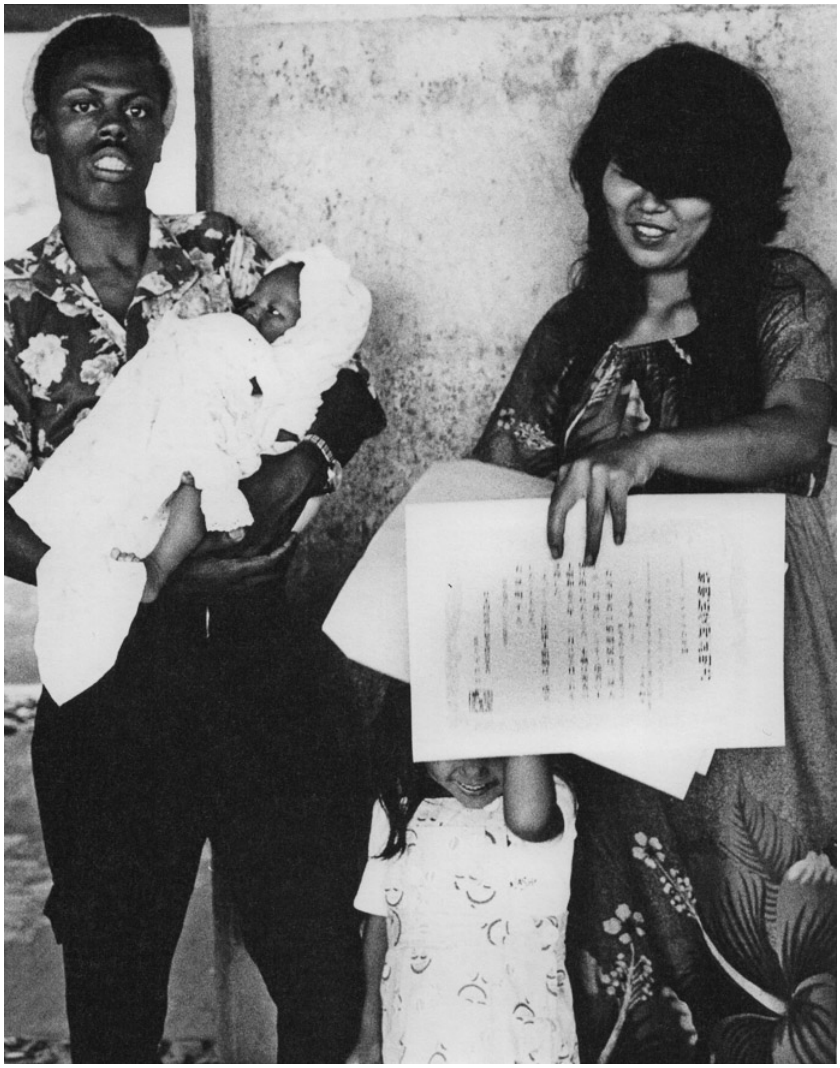

Figure 17: "Untitled" from *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa* by Ishikawa Mao, 2013.

Also pictured is a young girl, her face partially obscured by the documents the woman is holding; she is perhaps the same girl as in the previous image (figure 16). As opposed to figure 16, this photograph conforms more readily to the snapshot genre in its subject matter, conventional composition, and candid posing of subjects. A sense of happiness is conveyed by the smiles on the faces of the woman and the girl (who is perhaps this woman's daughter from another relationship), while the man's more serious expression suggests the gravity of the moment for him, the new father and husband. The presence of official documentation is a testament of this couple's commitment to their union and thus a counterexample to the impression of base town relationships as transitory and mainly concerned with providing sex as solace for lonely soldiers who will soon be transferred elsewhere.

Each image also contains subtle reminders, however, of the sociopolitical contingencies at work against the ongoing success of this union. For example, in figure 15, although the balance of human figures and family scene at left of frame suggest domestic harmony, the image is also divided by the dark edge of the sliding door in a manner that separates the man in the background and small child. This gives a sense of separation; the space at right of frame is an isolated one, an impression enhanced by the oppositional postures of the man and girl. At right of frame, the girl sits alone and looks directly at the camera with a bored, even slightly sad, expression – perhaps she fears that this new baby has taken (or will take) her place. She sits on the edge of the chair, not comfortable but impatient and isolated, seemingly alienated from the family scene at left. The man reading the paper sits in a different room, separated from the others by the doorframe, looking off to his right as if wanting to be somewhere else. As not clearly a part of the group, his presence disrupts a sense of the image as a snapshot of a nuclear family.

Although there is less apparent discordance in figure 17, the man's serious expression is at odds with the humoured interplay between mother and the small girl. Further, the background visible is rough concrete, as is the small bit of ground behind the man. This minor glimpse of the spatial context reminds us of the rough, dangerous, and problematic socioeconomic disparities of the base towns, disparities rooted in the neocolonial occupation of Okinawa by the Americans with support from the Japanese government. Regardless of his individual behaviour and qualities, the man is unavoidably (to some small extent at least) a representative of the occupiers. As one last point, if we assume that the young girl in this image is the same as in figure 16, her happy presence, shared with her mother, further complicates the reading of the two images in that now the relation between mother and child seems to alienate the new father and new baby, reminding the viewer (and perhaps the man himself) of the man's status as an outsider.

More than any others discussed thus far in this chapter, these two images (figures 16 and 17) remind us of the photograph's instability as a means of

representation. On the one hand we are presented with the surface meaning: that of a happy union achieved in spite of societal norms regarding race and cultural politics. On the other, the material realities of the moment in which the image was taken work against authorial intentions, most notably the way the poses and gestures of the subjects (in both images) and the rough Okinawan urban landscape (in figure 17) disrupt an unproblematic depiction of idyllic domesticity. It is here again that Ishikawa's positioning as neither entirely family nor entirely photographer (thus bridging the boundary of private and public) differentiates her from that of the snapshot photographer who, according to Zuromskis, is wholly concerned with the task of constructing a veneer of normalcy in representations of nuclear family success. Through choice of subject and careful composition, the images in *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa* are simultaneously conventional and deeply unconventional. While this is clearly intentional, it does not suggest that Ishikawa as *auteur* maintains absolute control over the meanings of her images. The instability of her positioning coupled with the instability of the photographic medium itself produces these tensions between public and private, personal and political.

Instabilities of Racial and Gendered Power

The tensions that are observable in many images from *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa* speak to the broader social complexities of the Okinawan base towns. The base towns generally, as hybrid areas, are considered by mainstream Japan as exceptional: discrete and bounded and therefore not necessarily beholden to prevailing social mores. Ishikawa herself acknowledged this – indeed for her it was a principal virtue. She writes in commentary in the book that, unlike in the broader Okinawan community, in 'military town [sic] like Kin or Teruya, you didn't have to care about the eyes around you; everybody loved black guys. There was freedom to say what you wanted and to live your own life. That is why these women lived freely; they were joyful, powerful, and strong.'[565] It is this characteristic that drew women such as Yamada and those of the 'yellow cab' phenomena to these spaces. Because the towns were considered as separate to mainstream society, and in spite of loud discussion in the press, the interracial

[565] Ishikawa, *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa (Hot Days in Okinawa)*, n.p.g.

sexual relationships that prevailed in base communities did not necessarily threaten convention. This was particularly true of base towns in Okinawa, which became spaces of double exclusion and boundedness because of the subordinate status of the islands in relation to Japan. As Cornyetz observes:

> The centralization of the military in Okinawa created a 'colonized' site where black and white Americans constituted (to some degree) an other within. But conceptually, Okinawa (and Okinawans) stands excluded from 'pure' Japan and is situated among the other within. Interracial liaisons between soldiers and native Okinawan women were common, yet did not threaten the racial purity of 'real' Japanese. Moreover, the soldiers, because they stood outside the Japanese economy proper, offered no economic threat to the dominant (pure) class.[566]

The conclusion we might draw from Cornyetz's argument here is that the sense of liberation felt by the women was in one sense made possible by the very fact of Okinawa's subjugated status as a colonised space and its exclusion from mainstream Japanese culture. This is not to devalue the personal experiences of Ishikawa and the women in her photographs, to whom this liberation no doubt felt intensely real. In objective terms it is clear that the base towns in Okinawa created opportunities and life choices that without the American installations would not have been available. Takeuchi notes that this was particularly true for women from 'undesirable' backgrounds.[567] In fact, the empowerment of these women, the cross pollination that occurred amongst activists in early 1970s Okinawa, and the erosion of racial and gender boundaries point to the paradoxical nature of a space in which empowerment and oppression are coalescent.

The relations between black servicemen and Japanese/Okinawan women is perhaps most instructive in this regard. Like the base towns, the men themselves are nebulous signifiers. Although many came from poor and violent areas of the

[566] Cornyetz, "Power and Gender in the Narratives of Yamada Eimi," 442.
[567] Takeuchi, ""Pan-Pan Girls" Performing and Resisting Neocolonialism(S) in the Pacific Theater: U.S. Military Prostitution in Occupied Japan," 92.

United States and had experienced racialised violence and injustice both at home and in the military, in the base town they had an otherwise inaccessible power due to their status as US military. Some black servicemen were reluctant, however, to acknowledge the power inherent in their position as servicemen. Onishi has argued, moreover, that black rights activism in Okinawa was essentially male-centric and that the men involved failed to understand the implications of their being both representatives of an occupying force and part of a patriarchal system of oppression in which the bodies of Okinawan/Japanese prostitutes were a site for the enactment of male power.[568]

In spite of the dominance of masculine ideas, there was an ambiguity to the power relations between African American servicemen and local women at the time. Cornyetz, furthermore, has noted that even in Yamada's work, characterised as it is by stereotypical representations of African American men, power relationships between these men and the Japanese women represented are in no way static. In other words, neither men nor women have permanent ascendency.[569] The shifting power relations that Yamada depicts were in fact a feature of relations between American servicemen and Japanese bargirls from the start of the Occupation. Takeuchi writes how in Yokosuka women consciously played up to servicemen's Orientalist fantasies: they 'played and performed the myth of Japanese femininity to attract GIs for the sake of financial gain as well as social status.'[570] As a result, 'newly arrived young GIs' in particular were 'suckers (*ii kamo*) for them.'[571] This further demonstrates how the unique setting of the base town produces fluid and complex gender and racial power dynamics.

Of a similarly complex nature were the relations between the broader Okinawan populace and African American servicemen. Onishi argues that in addition to a lack of awareness about their status as men in a patriarchal system, there was

[568] Onishi, *Transpacific Antiracism: Afro Asian Solidarity in Twentieth Century Black America, Japan, and Okinawa*, 168-9,75.
[569] Cornyetz, "Power and Gender in the Narratives of Yamada Eimi," 445.
[570] Takeuchi, ""Pan-Pan Girls" Performing and Resisting Neocolonialism(S) in the Pacific Theater: U.S. Military Prostitution in Occupied Japan," 91.
[571] Ibid.

also a perception amongst Okinawans that the black activist movement members were insufficiently aware of discrimination against Okinawans and the black GIs' own complicity in this.[572] Onishi discusses an article, entitled 'Solidarity,' written by an African American and published in *Demand for Freedom*, a magazine produced by Black GIs at the Kadena Air Base (still the largest base in Okinawa). The article, Onishi argues, demonstrates how efforts to form solidarity with the local Okinawan activists was at times condescending and seemingly carried out without any awareness by the African American servicemen involved of their status as part of an occupying force. Below is an image of the cover of this newspaper (figure 18).

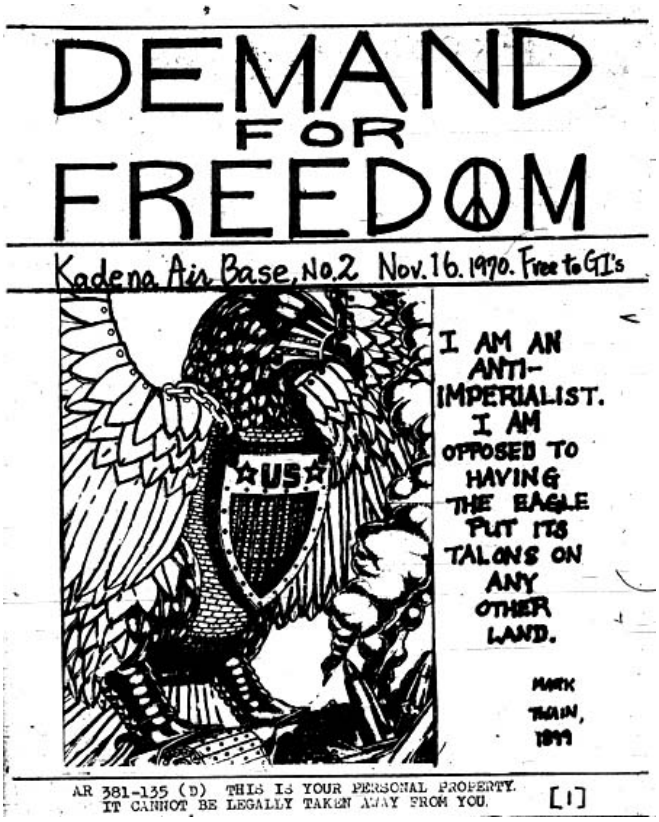

Figure 18: Cover of *Demand for Freedom*, Issue 2, November 16, 1970.

In an attempt to motivate the Okinawan population against the US government, the writer criticises Okinawa's economic dependency on the American bases, and the reluctance of Okinawans to stand up to the US presence. The author writes:

[572] Onishi, *Transpacific Antiracism: Afro Asian Solidarity in Twentieth Century Black America, Japan, and Okinawa*, 168-9.

'if you, the Okinawan people were not so scared of Amerikka [sic] and caught up on its dollars, you could be living a better life – one with less poverty, one with respect for your fellow Okinawan brothers and sisters.'[573] The author then argues how this reliance on American dollars finds its ultimate expression in the prostitution industry in the base towns. As Onishi observes, the article, through its 'narrative of defiance and solidarity…repeatedly cast[s] Okinawans as students in need of tutelage. A strain of colonial paternalism ran through its narrative.'[574] Moreover, in his criticism of local businesses that relied on prostitution for its profits, the writer failed to acknowledge how the prostitution services provided for the military were 'a cornerstone of the base political economy,' and propagated by soldiers such as himself.[575]

Conclusion

The inability of the newsletter's producers to adequately understand or acknowledge their own position within the neoimperialist power structures that governed Okinawa reflects the shifting complexity of power relations within the base towns at that time. Many African American soldiers had come from detrimental circumstances in their home country that were a result of long term racial inequities and continued to be discriminated against within the military. Given this, and the fact that the black rights movement was still a developing phenomenon, it is understandable that African American GIs might not necessarily associate themselves with the racialised and gendered power structures governing life in the base towns. Due to their similarly subjugated status, we can also see how the Okinawan bargirls who found a sense of liberation in sexual relations with these men might not identify with discourses that objectified African American men. Rather than a means by which to criticise, these perhaps unconscious contradictions are more productively understood as endemic to such hybrid and political spaces as the base towns, and also to the instabilities that haunt the notion of identity, whether individual, cultural or gendered. These instabilities can in part be attributed to the fact that identities,

[573] "Solidarity," *Demand for Freedom* (1970).
[574] *Transpacific Antiracism: Afro Asian Solidarity in Twentieth Century Black America, Japan, and Okinawa*, 176.
[575] Ibid.

like photography itself, are a mix of invention and reality. In keeping with her own liminal status as neither entirely objective documenter nor entirely subjective 'friend,' Ishikawa's *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa* reveals the complexities of identity politics as they manifested in the Okinawan base towns. Rather than adhere to simplistic and potentially derogatory tropes around either African American men or Asian women, *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa* transgresses the manufactured boundaries that underpin such tropes by depicting the intimate relationships between individuals from these two cultural groups. In part due to the manner in which historical realities at times disrupt authorial intentions, however, this representation is not unequivocally optimistic. Rather, upon viewing the images the viewer is also reminded of the structural contingencies that make these relationships precarious no matter the degree of sincere affection on the part of those involved.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has analysed the work of seven different photographers in order to illustrate how the inherent ambiguities of photographic representation make this an invaluable medium through which to explore the complex interrelations of place, identity, and modernity in postwar Japan. The camera's ability to record the material reality that exists before it gives the photograph an inevitable truth-value. This induces an almost involuntary expectation in the viewer of photographic veracity, despite objective understanding of the ease, especially in the digital age, with which photographs can be manipulated. Both the expectation of truth and the photograph's unique power to persuade can result in the viewer momentarily forgetting that, like other cultural products, photographs are representations that simultaneously inform and are informed by broader social discourses. These discourses interact with the material technologies, such as the camera itself, the film/digital sensor, and publishing formats that enable the production of images. In addition to discursive and technological influences, the intent of the photographer exerts a powerful influence on the production of the image. The analyses of the various images featured in the thesis demonstrate the multiple ways in which photographs bear the imprint of their author. This was apparent in factors such as framing, light, subject matter, and image processing.

The central factor that linked the differing perspectives and discourses of the images discussed was the ambiguous manner in which the various photographers discussed responded to the social disruption that was a feature of postwar Japan, an era that began with the 6 year occupation of the country by the United States military, an event which caused a fracturing of Japanese identity that arguably persists to the present day. Hayashi's depiction of Tokyo in *Kasutori Jidai* during the decade after defeat (chapter one) demonstrates the precarity of a society occupied by the victors and marked by a mixture of suffering and hope. This was followed by Takanashi's portrayal (chapter two) in *Tokyojin* of the lonely and confounding existence that, in spite of Japan's economic success, was the lot of many who made their homes in the country's

major urban space. Here, social critique was often a feature of the material viewed. Naitō's *Tōkyō* photos, too, featured an indictment of the modern, with the damage wrought by modernity made explicit by the attention given to the persistence of the premodern in the dark spaces of 1970s and 80s Tokyo (chapter three). In other instances, critique was less explicit. Although Hamaya's depiction of rural spaces and local culture in *Yukiguni* (chapter four) was driven by a deep dissatisfaction with the modern technologies of wartime Japan, the photographer's images omit the important historical context of that era in favour of a longing for a lost way of life. While a similar nostalgia for the imagined past is observable in Suda's *Fushi Kaden* (chapter five), the imagined past in that work is located in the photographer's present and represented as an intangible experience found in the interstitial moments of everyday life. And although Tōmatsu's *Taiyō no enpitsu* images (chapter six) suggest a similar fantasising about an originary Japan, as in Suda's work, this 'Japan' is firmly located in contemporary times. Each project pointed viewers towards the extent to which the respective photographers were entangled in modern systems of thought.

In addition to expressing dissatisfaction with universal aspects of modernity, each photographer linked the particular notions of place constructed in his or her images with that of Japanese identity. For several, given how the modern had putatively destroyed the old ways and rhythmic flows that characterised local societies until the nineteenth century arrival of the West, and given how the country had been doubly violated by war and then occupation, 'Japan' was located in rural and natural spaces, and 'America' in the cities. Yet, as particularly apparent in Tōmatsu's *Taiyō no enpitsu* (chapter six) and also in the same photographer's *Chewing Gum and Chocolate* (chapter seven), such neat demarcations of geographical space and cultural identity are problematic. This is especially the case in Tōmatsu's base town photography that complicates one dimensional ideas of 'America,' while also demonstrating the difficulties involved in maintaining clear notions of identity in individual encounters with the Other. Even greater challenges to simplistic notions of identity are evident in the transgressive representations of normative notions of gender, race, and family,

in the visual account of relationships between Okinawan women and African American men given in Ishikawa's *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa* (chapter eight).

The complex interaction between space or place and identity – collective or individual – provides the ambiguous dimension that characterises each photographer's work. As noted above, the collections by Hayashi, Takanashi, and Naitō foregrounded the urban spaces of Tokyo, emphasising these as the primary sites in Japan's postwar era. To some extent, each portrayed the city in a negative light – whether that be as a site of destruction and foreign occupation, a shallow and disorienting postmodern consumer culture, or capitalist industrial society that produces desperation and suffering for those on its edge. At the same time, however, the immediate postwar Tokyo of Hayashi's images seemed to contain the possibility of a brighter future. Similarly, while Naitō foregrounded the destructive forces of modernity, he also sought to capture a 'past' that persisted in the marginal urban space. This included, for example, the communal life that could be found in the city's dark corners, a kind of prospering of community that defied consumer culture's persistent logic of disposal and redundancy. Suda's several urban images, too, document the existence of the premodern that remains in the in between moments of modern life, particularly in traditional festival practices. Thus, even as they reveal the negative aspects of the city, the images analysed in these chapters highlight the ambiguities of contemporary urban space. Modern rationalising logic is overlayed upon, and in constant tension with, preexisting modes of being that are conventionally regarded as lost or obsolete.

The depictions of Japan's rural areas are similarly resistant to straightforward images of a nostalgic space outside the modern. In Hamaya's case, for example, in spite of the photographer's intention to portray the snow country of Niigata Prefecture as a bounded site untainted by war or modernity, the photographer's very practice demonstrates the impossibility of this task. In other words, romanticisation of the pastoral is the privilege of the modern subject who is cognitively distanced from the hardships of rural existence. Hamaya's depiction of rural life is thus rife with the internalised tensions of the modern subject who,

while critical of modernity, is unable to break free from its shackles. A similar phenomenon is apparent in Tōmatsu's images of Okinawa's natural spaces, where the fragility of any epistemological or ontological divide between modern and premodern is an undertone that marks his work. In a manner similar to the images by Hamaya, Tōmatsu's work highlights the incongruity of a technological medium interpreting a natural subject. Characterised as it is by the objectifying and rationalising modes of science, photography is a method of representation seemingly at odds with the idyllic Okinawan mountain and coastal landscapes in which Tōmatsu sought to console himself by documenting the originary source of Japan. A similar tension is apparent in the work of Suda, where modernist and surreal aesthetics were employed in order to capture a visceral sense of a supposedly premodern lifeworld experience. Yet, as in the depictions of Tokyo and the city, the viewer can discern a collapse of boundaries between 'past' and 'present' also in these rural images. In the same way that the premodern persists and was never really overcome in the modern centre, so does modernity penetrate the seemingly untouched peripheries.

The thesis culminated with two chapters on American base towns. This was a deliberate decision given that, while the illusion of maintaining binary notions of urban and rural spaces – analogous to dystopic America and utopic Japan – might be sustained in other locations, the observation of such neat boundaries is impossible in the base town's liminal space. This is especially the case in Okinawa. Here, as a result of the visceral memories of war and the continued presence of US military that permeates even the most far flung regions of the prefecture, modernity and America are always intertwined with the 'purity' of the rural location. This instability was noticeable in the tension that lies beneath the surface of the idyllic natural visage presented in Tōmatsu's *Taiyō no enpitsu* images. And, while the encounter with America might be especially confronting in Okinawa's urban centres, the images from both Tōmatsu's *Chewing Gum and Chocolate* and Ishikawa's *Atsuki hibi in Okinawa* demonstrate how cross cultural relations in the base towns cannot simply be reduced to neocolonial binaries of oppressor/oppressed. Particularly significant is the manner in which the images constructed by these photographers depict base town Americans in ways that

reveal the complex interplay between the individual and the sociopolitical and institutional context in which that individual is located. While neither is neatly separable from the other, the individual is nonetheless not the same as the institution. Rather, we saw in the images discussed how political and cultural stereotypes can collapse at the level of individual encounters. In Tōmatsu's images, a strong critique of America's continued postwar dominance over Okinawa (and Japan more broadly) coalesces with an interest and curiosity in the individual American servicemen whom he encounters. Power informs, while never entirely defining, his encounters with these Americans. And while Ishikawa depicts cross cultural relations at their most intimate, the intensely private moments she captures are not confined to a sanctified private sphere. Rather, her images are repeatedly marked by signs of tense political discourses around gender, race, and American neocolonialism.

It has been noted how defeat in war and occupation by the United States saw American culture and modernity merge in the postwar era. This makes it inevitable that America is a recurring theme in much of the photographic material discussed in a manner that is invariably associated with identity. In many instances this America and its culture is explicitly present, as in Hayashi's Occupation era work and in Tōmatsu and Ishikawa's base town images. More often, however, these signs of America are implicit, as in the critiques of postwar society mounted by Takanashi and Naitō. Most disturbingly, America can sometimes be an absent other as in the sanitised depictions of traditional life that mark the work of Hamaya, Suda, and Tōmatsu. Regardless of the particular mode of manifestation, however, the signs of 'America' are ubiquitous throughout and bear down on attempts by people located in the various places and spaces of Japan to reconstruct after the devastation of war.

This inextricable tension between the universalising modernity that America represents and the traditions seen to be part of an 'authentic' Japan brings to the images of each photographer a highly ambiguous sense of identity. In this sense, the photographs presented explore distinct notions of Japanese cultural identity and the capacity – or often the inability – to maintain one's individual identity in

the face of the homogenising forces of modern society. At times, the seemingly oppositional notions of Japan and America become interchangeable, or at least closely meshed, as America threatens to overwhelm the local on both a social and individual level. Concurrent with this, and at times similarly intertwined, are the politics of gender identity. Gendered notions of national identity are particularly observable in the images of Hayashi and also in those of Tōmatsu and Ishikawa. In these images, occupation, and then the persistent presence of American soldiers in base towns, is a reminder of the emasculating experience of defeat that has implications for all Japanese but especially for base town women. This complex amalgam, often associated with Japanese patriarchal discourses as much as with postwar liberatory discourses of sexual freedom, is captured most directly in the images that depict relations between African American servicemen and Japanese women. Yet as the work of Hayashi, Tōmatsu, and more pointedly Ishikawa, also demonstrates, simple binaries of masculine America and feminine Japan can often unravel in unexpected and transgressive ways in the close proximity of the interpersonal encounters involved. In particular, Tōmatsu and Ishikawa's images show us the extent to which simplistic ideas of an idealised, monolithic, and all-powerful 'America' is undercut by an understanding of the inequities of American racial politics. It is also unsettled by the feminist discourses of the era which saw women begin to assert their sexual identities and demand the right to express desire. This was apparent in the nature of the relationships sought by bar women in Okinawa with African American men as captured by Ishikawa. The ambiguity inherent in the images constructed by the latter became even more charged by the photographer's insider/outsider status.

Above all else, the images discussed in this thesis demonstrate the suitability of the photographic medium as a means of probing complex issues such as those outlined above. A photograph is never simply an unadulterated record, nor is it purely a product of authorship; rather, it is characterised by the tension between these two aspects. By paying attention to the interplay between the 'fact' recorded and the intention of the photographer – and how these in turn relate to the social discourses that prevail at the time of the photograph's production – we

gain a richer understanding of the tensions surrounding identity discourses in Japan's postwar society. Specifically, an acknowledgement of the photograph's direct connection to material reality draws our attention to the circumstances that influenced the creation of the image. This allows us to consider the work in its discursive and historical context, often in ways that run counter to the expressed intentions of the photographer. This is because, as demonstrated by the examples considered throughout this thesis, material reality at times disrupts authorial intentions within the image itself. Destabilising any single interpretation, the material reality being photographed ensures an often fraught complexity of meaning. An understanding of the extent to which photographs are mediated both by institutional contexts and, more pointedly, by the input of the photographer, allows us to move beyond a simplistic reception of them as literal description. Instead, such a nuanced understanding helps us divest the photograph – at least to some extent – of what at times is its disproportionate ability to persuade, to provoke too passive a reaction from the viewer, to be too readily received as 'evidence.' As the photographic manipulation discussion that commenced this thesis confirms, this tendency persists even today, despite our knowledge of the relative ease with which photographs can be digitally manipulated. The outrage that accompanies the discovery of such manipulation speaks to the privileged status photography maintains in regards to 'truth.'

The persuasive nature of the photograph is particularly important to keep in mind when looking at photographic images of postwar Japan. Viewing photographs as neither entirely documents of record nor entirely invented objects encourages a nuanced understanding of the latent issues surrounding identity. Identity discourses by their very nature and their reliance on the highly problematic binary of self and other, can tend towards bounded meanings, towards the privileging of one at the expense of the other. This was particularly true in postwar Japan, where the multiple traumas of war, defeat, and occupation each contributed to a longing for a Japanese identity that was hermetically sealed from the impact of globalising modernity. Rather than adding to the often divisive discourses of simplistic boundaries of Japan/Other and modernity/tradition, the photographic analysis presented in this thesis offered

an important opportunity to confirm the artificial nature of and thus destabilise these boundaries. The instability that haunts photographic representations similarly haunts notions of identity. Considering these in tandem provides productive insights into both realms.

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